

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XL.

It was fortunate for me that I had to take precautions to ensure (so far as I could) the safety of my dreaded visitor; for, this thought pressing on me when I awoke, held other thoughts in a confused concourse at a distance.

The impossibility of keeping him concealed in the chambers was self-evident. It could not be done, and the attempt to do it would inevitably engender suspicion. True, I had no Avenger in my service now, but I was looked after by an inflammatory old female, assisted by an animated rag-bag whom she called her niece, and to keep a room secret from them would be to invite curiosity and exaggeration. They both had weak eyes, which I had long attributed to their chronically looking in at keyholes, and they were always at hand when not wanted; indeed that was their only reliable quality besides larceny. Not to get up a mystery with these people, I resolved to announce in the morning that my uncle had unexpectedly come from the country.

This course I decided on while I was yet groping about in the darkness for the means of getting a light. Not stumbling on the means after all, I was fain to go out to the adjacent Lodge and get the watchman there to come with his lantern. Now, in groping my way down the black staircase I fell over something, and that something was a man crouching in a corner.

As the man made no answer when I asked him what he did there, but eluded my touch in silence, I ran to the Lodge and urged the watchman to come back quickly: telling him of the incident on the way back. The wind being as fierce as ever, we did not care to endanger the light in the lantern by rekindling the extinguished lamps on the staircase, but we examined the staircase from the bottom to the top and found no one there. It then occurred to me as possible that the man might have slipped into my rooms; so, lighting my candle at the watchman's, and leaving him standing at the door, I examined them carefully, including the room in which my dreaded guest lay asleep. All was quiet, and assuredly no other man was in those chambers.

It troubled me that there should have been

a lurker on the stairs, on that night of all nights in the year, and I asked the watchman, on the chance of eliciting some hopeful explanation as I handed him a dram at the door, whether he had admitted at his gate any gentlemen who had perceptibly been dining out? Yes, he said; at different times of the night, three. One lived in Fountain-court, and the other two lived in the Lane, and he had seen them all go home. Again, the only other man who dwelt in the house of which my chambers formed a part, had been in the country for some weeks; and he certainly had not returned in the night, because we had seen his door with his seal on it as we came up-stairs.

"The night being so bad, sir," said the watchman, as he gave me back my glass, "uncommon few have come in at my gate. Besides them three gentlemen that I have named, I don't call to mind another since about eleven o'clock, when a stranger asked for you."

"My uncle," I muttered. "Yes."

"You saw him, sir?"

"Yes. Oh yes."

"Likewise the person with him?"

"Person with him!" I repeated.

"I judged the person to be with him," returned the watchman. "The person stopped when he stopped to make inquiry of me, and the person took this way when he took this way."

"What sort of person?"

The watchman had not particularly noticed; he should say, a working person; to the best of his belief, he had a dust-coloured kind of clothes on, under a dark coat. The watchman made more light of the matter than I did, and naturally; not having my reason for attaching weight to it.

When I had got rid of him, which I thought it well to do without prolonging explanations, my mind was much troubled by these two circumstances taken together. Whereas they were easy of innocent solution apart—as, for instance, some diner-out or diner-at-home, who had not gone near this watchman's gate, might have strayed to my staircase and dropped asleep there—and my nameless visitor might have brought some one with him to show him the way—still, joined, they had an ugly look to one as prone to distrust and fear as the changes of a few hours had made me.

I lighted my fire, which burnt with a raw pale flare at that time of the morning, and

fell into a doze before it. I seemed to have been dozing a whole night when the clocks struck six. As there was full an hour and a half between me and daylight, I dozed again; now, waking up uneasily, with prolix conversations about nothing, in my ears; now, making thunder of the wind in the chimney; at length falling off into a profound sleep from which the daylight woke me with a start.

All this time I had never been able to consider my own situation, nor could I do so yet. I had not the power to attend to it. I was greatly dejected and distressed, but in an incoherent wholesale sort of way. As to forming any plan for the future, I could as soon have formed an elephant. When I opened the shutters and looked out at the wet wild morning, all of a leaden hue; when I walked from room to room; when I sat down again shivering, before the fire, waiting for my laundress to appear; I thought how miserable I was, but hardly knew why, or how long I had been so, or on what day of the week I made the reflection, or even who I was that made it.

At length the old woman and the niece came in—the latter with a head not easily distinguishable from her dusty broom—and testified surprise at sight of me and the fire. To whom I imparted how my uncle had come in the night and was then asleep, and how the breakfast preparations were to be modified accordingly. Then I washed and dressed while they knocked the furniture about and made a dust, and so, in a sort of dream or sleep-waking, I found myself sitting by the fire again, waiting for—Him—to come to breakfast.

By-and-by, his door opened and he came out. I could not bring myself to bear the sight of him, and I thought he had a worse look by daylight.

"I do not even know," said I, speaking low as he took his seat at the table, "by what name to call you. I have given out that you are my uncle."

"That's it, dear boy! Call me uncle."

"You assumed some name, I suppose, on board ship?"

"Yes, dear boy. I took the name of Provis."

"Do you mean to keep that name?"

"Why, yes, dear boy, it's as good as another—unless you'd like another."

"What is your real name?" I asked him in a whisper.

"Magwitch," he answered, in the same tone; "chris'en'd Abel."

"What were you brought up to be?"

"A warmint, dear boy."

He answered quite seriously, and used the word as if it denoted some profession.

"When you came into the Temple last night—" said I, pausing to wonder whether that could really have been last night, which seemed so long ago.

"Yes, dear boy?"

"When you came in at the gate and asked the watchman the way here, had you any one with you?"

"With me? No, dear boy."

"But there was some one there?"

"I didn't take particular notice," he said, dubiously, "not knowing the ways of the place. But I think there *was* a person, too, come in *alonger* me."

"Are you known in London?"

"I hope not!" said he, giving his neck a jerk with his forefinger that made me turn hot and sick.

"Were you known in London, once?"

"Not over and above, dear boy. I was in the provinces mostly."

"Were you—tried—in London?"

"Which time?" said he, with a sharp look.

"The last time."

He nodded. "First known Mr. Jaggars that way. Jaggars was for me."

It was on my lips to ask him what he was tried for, but he took up a knife, gave it a flourish, and with the words, "And whatever I done is worked out and paid for!" fell to at his breakfast.

He ate in a ravenous way that was very disagreeable, and all his actions were uncouth, noisy, and greedy. Some of his teeth had failed him since I saw him eat on the marshes, and as he turned his food in his mouth, and turned his head sideways to bring his strongest fangs to bear upon it, he looked terribly like a hungry old dog. If I had begun with any appetite, he would have taken it away, and I should have sat much as I did—repelled from him by an insurmountable aversion, and gloomily looking at the cloth.

"I'm a heavy grubber, dear boy," he said, as a polite kind of apology when he had made an end of his meal, "but I always was. If it had been in my constitution to be a lighter grubber, I might ha' got into lighter trouble. Similarly, I must have my smoke. When I was first hired out as shepherd t'other side the world, it's my belief I should ha' turned into a mollycolly-mad sheep myself, if I hadn't a had my smoke."

As he said so, he got up from table, and putting his hand into the breast of the pea-coat he wore, brought out a short black pipe, and a handful of loose tobacco of the kind that is called Negro-head. Having filled his pipe, he put the surplus tobacco back again, as if his pocket were a drawer. Then he took a live coal from the fire with the tongs, and lighted his pipe at it, and then turned round on the hearthrug with his back to the fire, and went through his favourite action of holding out both his hands for mine.

"And this," said he, dandling my hands up and down in his, as he puffed at his pipe; "and this is the gentleman what I made! The real genuine One! It does me good far to look at you, Pip. All I stip'late, is, to stand by and look at you, dear boy!"

I released my hands as soon as I could, and found that I was beginning slowly to settle down to the contemplation of my condition. What I was chained to, and how heavily, became intelligible to me, as I heard his hoarse voice,

and sat looking up at his furrowed bald head with its iron grey hair at the sides.

"I mustn't see my gentleman a footing it in the mire of the streets; there mustn't be no mud on *his* boots. My gentleman must have horses, Pip! Horses to ride, and horses to drive, and horses for his servant to ride and drive as well. Shall colonists have their horses (and blood 'uns, if you please, good Lord!) and not my London gentleman? No, no. We'll show 'em another pair of shoes than that, Pip; won't us?"

He took out of his pocket a great thick pocket-book, bursting with papers, and tossed it on the table.

"There's something worth spending in that there book, dear boy. It's yourn. All I've got ain't mine; it's yourn. Don't you be afeerd on it. There's more where that come from. I've come to the old country fur to see my gentleman spend his money *like* a gentleman. That'll be *my* pleasure. *My* pleasure 'ull be fur to see him do it. And blast you all!" he wound up, looking round the room and snapping his fingers once with a loud snap, "blast you every one, from the judge in his wig, to the colonist a stirring up the dust, I'll show a better gentleman than the whole kit on you put together!"

"Stop!" said I, almost in a frenzy of fear and dislike, "I want to speak to you. I want to know what is to be done. I want to know how you are to be kept out of danger, how long you are going to stay, what projects you have."

"Look'ee here, Pip," said he, laying his hand on my arm in a suddenly altered and subdued manner; "first of all, look'ee here. I forgot myself half a minute ago. What I said was low; that's what it was; low. Look'ee here, Pip. Look over it. I ain't a going to be low."

"First," I resumed, half groaning, "what precautions can be taken against your being recognised and seized?"

"No, dear boy," he said, in the same tone as before, "that don't go first. Lowness goes first. I ain't took so many year to make a gentleman, not without knowing what's due to him. Look'ee here, Pip. I was low; that's what I was; low. Look over it, dear boy."

Some sense of the grimly-ludicrous moved me to a fretful laugh, as I replied, "I *have* looked over it. In Heaven's name, don't harp upon it!"

"Yes, but look'ee here," he persisted. "Dear boy, I ain't come so fur to be low. Now, go on, dear boy. You was a saying——"

"How are you to be guarded from the danger you have incurred?"

"Well, dear boy, the danger ain't so great. Without I was informed agen, the danger ain't so much to signify. There's Jagers, and there's Wemmick, and there's you. Who else is there to inform?"

"Is there no chance person who might identify you in the street?" said I.

"Well," he returned, "there ain't many.

Nor yet I don't intend to advertise myself in the papers by the name of A. M. come back from Botany Bay; and years have rolled away, and who's to gain by it? Still, look'ee here, Pip. If the danger had been fifty times as great, I should ha' come to see you, mind you, just the same."

"And how long do you remain?"

"How long?" said he, taking his black pipe from his mouth, and dropping his jaw as he stared at me. "I'm not a going back. I've come for good."

"Where are you to live?" said I. "What is to be done with you? Where will you be safe?"

"Dear boy," he returned, "there's disguising wigs can be bought for money, and there's hair powder, and spectacles, and black clothes—shorts and what not. Others has done it safe afore, and what others has done afore, others can do agen. As to the where and how of living, dear boy, give me your own opinions on it."

"You take it smoothly now," said I, "but you were very serious last night, when you swore it was Death."

"And so I swear it is Death," said he, putting his pipe back in his mouth, "and Death by the rope, in the open street not fur from this, and it's serious that you should fully understand it to be so. What then, when that's once done? Here I am. To go back now, 'ud be as bad as to stand ground—worse. Besides, Pip, I'm here, because I've meant it by you, years and years. As to what I dare, I'm a old bird now, as has dared all manner of traps since first he was fledged, and I'm not afeerd to perch upon a scarecrow. If there's Death hid inside of it, there is, and let him come out, and I'll face him, and then I'll believe in him and not afore. And now let me have a look at my gentleman agen."

Once more he took me by both hands and surveyed me with an air of admiring proprietorship: smoking with great complacency all the while.

It appeared to me that I could do no better than secure him some quiet lodging hard by, of which he might take possession when Herbert returned: whom I expected in two or three days. That the secret must be confided to Herbert as a matter of unavoidable necessity, even if I could have put the immense relief I should derive from sharing it with him out of the question, was plain to me. But it was by no means so plain to Mr. Provis (I resolved to call him by that name), who reserved his consent to Herbert's participation until he should have seen him and formed a favourable judgment of his physiognomy. "And even then, dear boy," said he, pulling a greasy little clasped black Testament out of his pocket, "we'll have him on his oath."

To state that my terrible patron carried this little black book about the world solely to swear people on in cases of emergency, would be to state what I never quite established—but this I can say, that I never knew him put it to any other use. The book itself had the appearance of having been stolen from some court

of justice, and perhaps his knowledge of its antecedents combined with his own experience in that wise, gave him a reliance on its powers as a sort of legal spell or charm. On this first occasion of his producing it, I recalled how he had made me swear fidelity in the churchyard long ago, and how he had described himself last night as always swearing to his resolutions in his solitude.

As he was at present dressed in a seafaring slop suit, in which he looked as if he had some parrots and cigars to dispose of, I next discussed with him what dress he should wear. He cherished an extraordinary belief in the virtues of "shorts" as a disguise, and had in his own mind sketched a dress for himself that would have made him something between a dean and a dentist. It was with considerable difficulty that I won him over to the assumption of a dress more like a prosperous farmer's; and we arranged that he should cut his hair close and wear a little powder. Lastly, as he had not yet been seen by the laundress or her niece, he was to keep himself out of their view until his change of dress was made.

It would seem a simple matter to decide on these precautions; but in my dazed, not to say distracted, state, it took so long, that I did not get out to further them, until two or three in the afternoon. He was to remain shut up in the chambers while I was gone, and was on no account to open the door.

There being to my knowledge a respectable lodging-house in Essex-street, the back of which looked into the Temple, and was almost within hail of my windows, I first of all repaired to that house, and was so fortunate as to secure the second floor for my uncle, Mr. Provis. I then went from shop to shop, making such purchases as were necessary to the change in his appearance. This business transacted, I turned my face, on my own account, to Little Britain. Mr. Jaggers was at his desk, but, seeing me enter, got up immediately and stood before his fire.

"Now, Pip," said he, "be careful."

"I will, sir," I returned. For, I had thought well of what I was going to say coming along.

"Don't commit yourself," said Mr. Jaggers, "and don't commit any one. You understand—any one. Don't tell me anything: I don't want to know anything; I am not curious."

Of course I saw that he knew the man was come.

"I merely want, Mr. Jaggers," said I, "to assure myself that what I have been told is true. I have no hope of its being untrue, but at least I may verify it."

Mr. Jaggers nodded. "But did you say 'told,' or 'informed?'" he asked me, with his head on one side, and not looking at me, but looking in a listening way at the floor. "Told would seem to imply verbal communication. You can't have verbal communication with a man in New South Wales, you know."

"I will say, informed, Mr. Jaggers."

"Good."

"I have been informed by a person named

Abel Magwitch, that he is the benefactor so long unknown to me."

"That is the man," said Mr. Jaggers, "—in New South Wales."

"And only he?" said I.

"And only he," said Mr. Jaggers.

"I am not so unreasonable, sir, as to think you at all responsible for my mistakes and wrong conclusions; but I always supposed it was Miss Havisham."

"As you say, Pip," returned Mr. Jaggers, turning his eyes upon me coolly, and taking a bite at his forefinger, "I am not at all responsible for that."

"And yet it looked so like it, sir," I pleaded with a downcast heart.

"Not a particle of evidence, Pip," said Mr. Jaggers, shaking his head and gathering up his skirts. "Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence. There's no better rule."

"I have no more to say," said I, with a sigh, after standing silent for a little while. "I have verified my information, and there an end."

"And Magwitch—in New South Wales—having at last disclosed himself," said Mr. Jaggers, "you will comprehend, Pip, how rigidly throughout my communication with you, I have always adhered to the strict line of fact. There has never been the least departure from the strict line of fact. You are quite aware of that?"

"Quite, sir."

"I communicated to Magwitch—in New South Wales—when he first wrote to me—from New South Wales—the caution that he must not expect me ever to deviate from the strict line of fact. I also communicated to him another caution. He appeared to me to have obscurely hinted in his letter at some distant idea he had of seeing you in England here. I cautioned him that I must hear no more of that; that he was not at all likely to obtain a pardon; that he was expatriated for the term of his natural life; and that his presenting himself in this country would be an act of felony, rendering him liable to the extreme penalty of the law. I gave Magwitch that caution," said Mr. Jaggers, looking hard at me; "I wrote it to New South Wales. He guided himself by it, no doubt."

"No doubt," said I.

"I have been informed by Wemmick," pursued Mr. Jaggers, still looking hard at me, "that he has received a letter, under date Portsmouth, from a colonist of the name of Purvis, or——"

"Or Provis," I suggested.

"Or Provis—thank you, Pip. Perhaps it is Provis? Perhaps you know it's Provis?"

"Yes," said I.

"You know it's Provis. A letter, under date Portsmouth, from a colonist of the name of Provis, asking for the particulars of your address, on behalf of Magwitch. Wemmick sent him the particulars, I understand, by return of post. Probably it is through Provis that you have received the explanation of Magwitch—in New South Wales?"

"It came through Provis," I replied.

"Good day, Pip," said Mr. Jaggers, offering his hand; "glad to have seen you. In writing by post to Magwitch—in New South Wales—or in communicating with him through Provis, have the goodness to mention that the particulars and vouchers of our long account shall be sent to you, together with the balance; for there is still a balance remaining. Good-day, Pip!"

We shook hands, and he looked hard at me as long as he could see me. I turned at the door, and he was still looking hard at me, while the two vile casts on the shelf seemed to be trying to get their eyelids open, and to force out of their swollen throats, "O, what a man he is!"

Wemmick was out, and though he had been at his desk he could have done nothing for me. I went straight back to the Temple, where I found the terrible Provis drinking rum-and-water and smoking negro-head, in safety.

Next day the clothes I had ordered, all came home, and he put them on. Whatever he put on became him less (it dismally seemed to me) than what he had worn before. To my thinking, there was something in him that made it hopeless to attempt to disguise him. The more I dressed him and the better I dressed him, the more he looked like the slouching fugitive on the marshes. This effect on my anxious fancy was partly referable, no doubt, to his old face and manner growing more familiar to me; but I believe too that he dragged one of his legs as if there were still a weight of iron on it, and that from head to foot there was Convict in the very grain of the man.

The influences of his solitary hut-life were upon him besides, and gave him a savage air that no dress could tame; added to these, were the influences of his subsequent branded life among men, and crowning all, his consciousness that he was dodging and hiding now. In all his ways of sitting and standing, and eating and drinking—of brooding about, in a high-shouldered reluctant style—of taking out his great horn-handled jack-knife and wiping it on his legs and cutting his food—of lifting light glasses and cups to his lips, as if they were clumsy panikins—of chopping a wedge off his bread, and soaking up with it the last fragments of gravy round and round his plate, as if to make the most of an allowance, and then drying his finger-ends on it, and then swallowing it—in these ways and a thousand other small nameless instances arising every minute in the day, there was Prisoner, Felon, Bondsman, plain as plain could be.

It had been his own idea to wear that touch of powder, and I had conceded the powder after overcoming the shorts. But I can compare the effect of it, when on, to nothing but the probable effect of rouge upon the dead; so awful was the manner in which everything in him that it was most desirable to repress, started through that thin layer of pretence, and seemed to come blazing out at the crown of his head. It was abandoned as soon as tried, and he wore his grizzled hair cut short.

Words cannot tell what a sense I had, at the

same time, of the dreadful mystery that he was to me. When he fell asleep of an evening with his knotted hands clenching the sides of the easy-chair, and his bald head tattooed with deep wrinkles falling forward on his breast, I would sit and look at him, wondering what he had done, and loading him with all the crimes in the Calendar, until the impulse was powerful on me to start up and fly from him. Every hour so increased my abhorrence of him, that I even think I might have yielded to this impulse in the first agonies of being so haunted, notwithstanding all he had done for me, and the risk he ran, but for the knowledge that Herbert must soon come back. Once, I actually did start out of bed in the night, and begin to dress myself in my worst clothes, hurriedly intending to leave him there with everything else I possessed, and enlist for India as a private soldier.

I doubt if a ghost could have been more terrible to me, up in those lonely rooms in the long evenings and long nights, with the wind and the rain always rushing by. A ghost could not have been taken and hanged on my account, and the consideration that he could be, and the dread that he would be, were no small addition to my horrors. When he was not asleep or playing a complicated kind of Patience with a ragged pack of cards of his own—a game that I never saw before or since, and in which he recorded his winnings by sticking his jack-knife into the table—when he was not engaged in either of these pursuits, he would ask me to read to him—"Foreign language, dear boy!" While I complied, he, not comprehending a single word, would stand before the fire surveying me with the air of an Exhibitor, and I would see him, between the fingers of the hand with which I shaded my face, appealing in dumb show to the furniture to take notice of my proficiency. The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion, the more he admired me and the fonder he was of me.

This is written of, I am sensible, as if it had lasted a year. It lasted about five days. Expecting Herbert all the time, I dared not go out, except when I took Provis for an airing after dark. At length, one evening when dinner was over and I had dropped into a slumber quite worn out—for my nights had been agitated and my rest broken by fearful dreams—I was roused by the welcome footstep on the staircase. Provis, who had been asleep too, staggered up at the noise I made, and in an instant I saw his jack-knife shining in his hand.

"Quiet! It's Herbert!" I said; and Herbert came bursting in, with the airy freshness of six hundred miles of France upon him.

"Handel, my dear fellow, how are you, and again how are you, and again how are you? I seem to have been gone a twelvemonth! Why, so I must have been, for you have grown quite thin and pale! Handel, my—Hullo! I beg your pardon."

He was stopped in his rattling on and in his shaking hands with me, by seeing Provis. Provis, regarding him with a fixed attention, was slowly putting up his jack-knife, and groping in another pocket for something else.

"Herbert, my dear friend," said I, shutting the double doors, while Herbert stood staring and wondering, "something very strange has happened. This is—a visitor of mine."

"It's all right, dear boy!" said Provis coming forward, with his little clasped black book, and then addressing himself to Herbert. "Take it in your right hand. Lord strike you dead on the spot if you ever split in any way sumever! Kiss it!"

"Do so, as he wishes it," I said to Herbert. So Herbert, looking at me with a friendly uneasiness and amazement, complied, and Provis immediately shaking hands with him, said, "Now you're on your oath, you know. And never believe me on mine, if Pip shan't make a gentleman on you!"

THE TREASURES OF THE EARTH.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THE surface of the earth, the air, and the shores and depths of the "abounding sea," have often been described, and present everywhere objects of beauty and interest. The earth, also, contains within its bosom marvelous and beautiful things, and these not only belong to that kingdom of nature in which life plays no part, but, in many cases, they boast a more tangible and direct value than the others. The earth, indeed, yields to man rich treasures of minerals, metals, and precious stones, serving as convenient representatives of money and property, and these, when their beauty of appearance in any way corresponds with the difficulty of obtaining them, become objects of ambition to great potentates, as well as the admiration of all classes, including the poet and the artist, the man of science, the votary of fashion, and the uncultivated savage.

Of these objects let us confine our attention to one group, for one is quite enough for consideration at a time. Let us talk of gems, precious stones, and jewels, leaving the metals, the many valuable minerals, that are less sightly than gems, and the curious fossils, buried records of former states of existence, while we consider those stones selected as ornaments of the crown, the cabinet, and the toilet, that glitter before our eyes on gala days, or are seen in museums, and in the shops of the jewellers.

There is great variety in the literature of gems. There is the natural history, and what we may call the personal history, the investigation of the optical properties, the story of the mechanical preparation of the commercial use, and the consideration of the money value. There is the chemistry and the geography, the science and the art, the religion and the mysticism, of jewels; each might serve as the heading of a chapter, but we will endeavour to give the reader an idea of the whole subject, without troubling him with such systematic divisions.

Of all gems the DIAMOND is the recognised queen, the most beautiful, the most valuable, the most durable, and the most useful; the hardest, though capable of being split; the symbol of justice, innocence, constancy, faith, and strength. According to a Jewish tradition, the diamond in the breastplate of Aaron became dark and dim when any person justly accused of a crime appeared before him, and blazed more brightly when the accusation was void of foundation. In the possession of any one the diamond was supposed, in former times, to mark the approach of poison by a damp exudation, and to be a sure defence against plagues and sorcery. Taken internally it was believed to be itself a poison.

No history dates back to the period at which diamonds were first discovered; but we are told, on classical authority, that a boy, a native of Crete, bearing the name afterwards given to this precious gem, was one of the attendants of the infant Jupiter in his cradle. The other attendants being promoted to the constellations, Diamond was transformed into the hardest and most brilliant substance in nature. In Hindu mythology the diamond plays an important part.

Diamonds are singularly associated with gold in the earth, but all that come into the market as gems have been obtained either from India or Brazil. The account in the Arabian Nights of Sinbad the Sailor obtaining diamonds by fishing for them with pieces of raw meat, is repeated as a fact of Indian statistics by the old Venetian traveller, Marco Polo. "The persons," he says, "who are in quest of diamonds take their stand near the mouth of a certain cavern, and from thence cast down several pieces of flesh, which the eagles and storks pursue into the valleys, and carry off with them to the tops of the rocks. Thither the men immediately ascend, and, recovering the pieces of meat, frequently find diamonds adhering to them." The more ordinary mode of obtaining them at present is by washing away the earth and stones from the gravel in which they are found.

The first Brazilian diamonds were discovered by accident just a century and a quarter ago. They also are found in the surface gravel, from which they are separated by water in nearly the same manner as in India. Upwards of seventy pounds' weight of these valuable jewels were collected and brought over to Europe in one year, shortly after the discovery of the deposit, and it is estimated that some two tons' weight, valued at sixteen millions sterling, had been obtained from the South American mines up to the year 1850. So abundantly have they been distributed that they have been picked up with vegetable roots in gardens, the stones in the roads have contained them, and the fowls have swallowed them to assist digestion.

Marvellous as it may seem, diamond is but coal in a crystalline form, and is hardly even so pure as some kinds of anthracite, or stone coal, found in Wales. Like coal, the diamond burns, or combines with oxygen, though only at a very

high temperature, and the whole substance then disappears in carbonic acid gas. Unlike coal, however, diamonds are usually transparent, possessing a peculiar lustre, hence called *adaman-tine*, and reflecting light from their inner surface. The light entering a diamond is bent more than in passing into any other substance in nature. Diamond is electric, even when rough, and possesses phosphoric and luminous properties after being exposed to the sun for some time. It is generally of crystalline form, but coated over in the mine by a thick crust, exceedingly hard. Still, even the children in countries where they abound, can generally detect the valuable gems in their concealment.

Diamonds require very careful cutting, so as to diminish their weight as little as possible consistently with ensuring the greatest amount of internal reflecting surface belonging to their form. Their value as gems depends greatly on the cutting, and this, of course, to some extent, on the original shape. What are technically called "brilliant" are those stones that can be cut without serious loss into the form of two pyramids placed base to base. Of these pyramids a slice of the one intended to be presented to the eye is cut off, while the other, serving to reflect light from its internal surface, although also flattened slightly, is much the more nearly pointed of the two. In fine brilliants the upper pyramid has thirty-two facets, or sides, and the lower twenty-four. Nearly half the diamond is often wasted in cutting a brilliant, but without it a fine stone can hardly be considered as presenting the real beauty that belongs to it. When, however, the form of the stone is such as not readily to admit of this treatment, only one pyramid is cut, and the base is embedded in the setting, making what is called a *rose diamond*. When there is a double pyramid the setting simply clasps the *girdle*, or junction of the bases of the two pyramids, and the two sets of faces are both exposed to the action of light. Besides these two kinds, some diamonds are cut flat, with irregular facets; these are called table diamonds, and their value, weight for weight, is very inferior to that of roses and brilliants.

Diamond-cutting is a business in the hands of Jews, and is chiefly carried on in Amsterdam, where, it is said, ten thousand persons are more or less dependent on it as an occupation. Owing to the extreme hardness of the stone the only means of acting on it are by rubbing two faces of different diamonds together, or cutting the stone by a circular steel saw covered with diamond dust.

Diamonds are not always colourless, though those most highly valued generally are so. The few that are known of fair size and clear distinct tints are even more costly than those of purest white. There is a difference, however, in the estimate of colour, the celebrated blue diamond of Mr. Hope, weighing one hundred and seventy-seven grains, and the green diamond of the crown of Saxony, the finest known coloured specimens, being more valuable than if they were white. The yellow varieties,

on the other hand, generally sell at lower prices than stones of equal weight without colour.

The largest diamond known is one, uncut, belonging to the Rajah of Mattan, in Borneo. It weighs more than two ounces and a quarter troy, but would probably be very greatly reduced if properly cut. It is egg-shaped, and indented at the smaller end. The largest regularly cut diamond is a rose, and of yellowish tint; it weighs one hundred and thirty-nine and a half carats,* or nearly an ounce. The finest brilliant is the Pitt, or Regent, diamond, now in the French crown. It originally weighed four hundred and ten carats, but has been reduced to one hundred and thirty-seven by cutting, and was sold to the Regent of France for about one hundred thousand pounds. Our Koh-i-noor, now only one hundred and two carats, is believed to have been part of the largest real diamond recorded, the unbroken stone having weighed nine hundred carats. It is supposed that the great Russian diamond, called the Orloff, now weighing one hundred and ninety-three carats, was originally another part of the same stone.

Diamonds are not always transparent, nor are they only valuable for ornamentation. A vast number are used for watches, and others for cutting glass. There is a ready demand for them to almost any extent, and, in spite of the large supply, the price is by no means falling.

Next to the diamond in value, in beauty, and in hardness, and in some cases rivalling, or even excelling it in the two former properties, are the gems obtained from crystallised clay. Strange that coal and clay, the two least likely substances to possess any intimate relations with beauty and hardness, should, in their crystalline forms, excel all others in both these respects! Not more strange, however, than true.

Under the name of RUBY and SAPPHIRE the red and blue varieties of crystallised clay are well known to the world. They are almost all obtained from Pegu, Ava, and the island of Ceylon: a singularly limited region for what one might expect would be much more widely distributed. Like the diamond, they are obtained by washing gravel, and all the varieties occur in the same district. These varieties include the Oriental sapphire, the Oriental ruby, the opalescent ruby, the star ruby, the green, yellow, and white sapphires, and the Oriental amethyst. Most of these are extremely rare, and all the finest specimens are believed to be still retained in the East. As, however, these stones of Eastern princes are rarely cut, and no doubt many of them would be found affected with flaws, their real money value if in the market would be very inferior to their estimated value.

There is a useful mineral of extreme hardness—the corundum of commerce, from which the hardest and finest emery is obtained—which is an

* The carat is the weight used all over the world to estimate the diamond. It originated in India, and is equal to about three and one-sixth grains troy, six carats being nineteen grains troy.

imperfect and opaque crystallisation, of the same origin as the ruby and sapphire. The gems themselves are clear, though rarely colourless. Small specimens are much less valuable in proportion than larger sizes, for they are far more abundant, but a perfect ruby of five carats is worth twice as much as a diamond of the same weight, and one of ten carats three times as much.

The ruby was called by the Greeks *anthrax*, or live coal, from its brilliant blood-red colour and exquisite beauty, which, like the diamond, is rather improved than diminished when seen by artificial light. From the intense blaze of blood-red, the colours of the ruby pale down by admixtures of blue through rose-red to lilac. Exposed to the rays of the sun, or heated, the ruby, like the diamond, becomes phosphoric. In the middle ages it was believed to be an antidote to poison, to dispel bad dreams, and to warn its owner of misfortune, by a darkening of its colour until the danger was past.

There is a very celebrated ruby, set under the back cross in the crown of England. It remains in its natural shape—that of a heart—and has received no polish. Its colour is that of a Morella cherry, and it is semi-transparent. It was brought from Spain by Edward the Black Prince, and was afterwards worn by Henry the Fifth at Agincourt. Other rubies of very large size are recorded, but few of them are polished, and fewer still are cut.

The sapphire is an exquisite blue variety of ruby; soft, rich, velvety, and delicate in the extreme by day, but losing much beauty by artificial light, even sometimes changing its tint. Occasionally it sparkles with great vividness in the sun, as a star with distinct rays, but such stones are only semi-transparent. There is a violet variety, called by jewellers the Oriental amethyst. It is a gem of great rarity and beauty, and takes a very brilliant polish, owing to its extreme hardness.

Like the ruby, the sapphire was held by the ancients and during the middle ages, in high honour. It was considered emblematic of purity. To look at one, preserved the eyesight; placed on the brow, it stopped hæmorrhage. The powder of sapphire was a sovereign remedy against plague and poison, and if merely placed over the mouth of a phial containing a venomous insect, the insect died on the instant. It is a Jewish superstition that the first tables of the law given by God to Moses were of this stone. It is certain, at any rate, that both rubies and sapphires have long been employed in the East to engrave upon, notwithstanding their great hardness.

Who has not looked with admiration at the rich, soft, lively meadow-green of the EMERALD! It is a gem which, when pure, comes next in value to those hard brilliant stones just described, but large specimens without flaw are really almost unknown. It loses nothing by exposure to artificial light.

The emerald is the lightest of all the clear valuable gems. It is soft, and is found in re-

gular crystals, often with the rock in which it has been formed. These crystals are long six-sided prisms, and though formerly found in the East, are now met with only in Peru, and, indeed, it is only of late years that even this resource has been available. The largest stone on record was in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and weighed nearly nine ounces. It measured two inches in length, and two and a quarter inches across.

A singular superstition has at all times attached to emerald mines. From the age of Pliny, when the Scythians obtained these stones, to our own times, there is a belief that the mines are guarded by demons, griffins, and wicked spirits. The mine "Les Esmeraldas," in Peru, could not be visited by Mr. Stevenson, "owing to the superstitious dread of the natives, who assured me that it was enchanted, and guarded by a dragon, who poured forth thunder and lightning on those who dared to ascend the river" that led to the mine.

In the East, emeralds are admired for extent of surface rather than for beauty of any other kind, and vast multitudes were sent over at the time of the great Exhibition in 1851, most of which were mere slices of crystals marked with many a flaw. Most of them were set as the ornaments of saddles and other horse and elephant trappings, and others were in jade boxes and cups of agate.

The emerald, like the gems already mentioned, has been regarded as possessing remarkable properties, restoring sight and memory, guarding from epilepsy, putting evil spirits to flight, and if unable to do good, shivering into atoms; for, in the words of a great authority on these subjects, "Elle doit ou lever le mal ou céder comme s'avouant vaincue par le plus fort dans le combat qu'elle rend."* That is, it ought either to remove the evil, or acknowledge itself vanquished. The emerald taught the knowledge of secrets, it bestowed eloquence, and it increased wealth. Even more than this, we have the poet's warrant that,

It is a gem which hath the power to show,
If plighted lovers keep their faith or no:
If faithful, it is like the leaves of spring;
If faithless, like those leaves when withering.

L. E. L.

Such are the recorded qualities of this beautiful gem; we may worship the excellence of the diamond, and wonder at the deep mystery of the ruby, or the cold brilliancy of the sapphire, but no one can fail to love the soft beauty of the emerald.

BERYL is a mineral much more commonly found in an impure state than capable of use as a gem. When in the latter state, it is of a transparent bluish green or sea-green colour, passing into blue by many shades. It is hence called aqua-marine. It resembles in many respects the emerald, but is less valued and is more widely distributed. Formerly it was re-

* Boetius de Boot. *Traité des Pierres*, l. ii. ch. liii. p. 253.

garded as especially efficacious in liver complaints, idleness, and stupidity.

The **TOPAZ** is a beautiful gem of bright citron, clear gold, or deep orange-yellow colour, sometimes soft and satin-like, sometimes hard and clear. What is sometimes called the Oriental topaz is really a yellow sapphire; but the gems properly recognised under the name are mostly from Brazil, though also found in Saxony and elsewhere in Europe. They were much valued by the ancients, as well for medicinal purposes as for dispelling enchantments and calming frenzy, but they must have been especially useful if, as supposed, they strengthened the intellect, brightened the wit, and cured the bearer of cowardice.

Topaz is not a very valuable stone, but there are some varieties of colour, such as the red, sometimes mistaken for ruby, and the blue, which are of great beauty and interest.

GARNETS are comparatively common stones, and are much used for ornamental purposes. They vary a good deal in composition and colour, and the varieties are known by many names. The finest of all is the Sorian or Oriental garnet, called generally carbuncle. Its colour is a rich blood red, passing into violet, but acquiring an orange tinge by artificial light. Fine specimens might easily pass for rubies if they were not readily distinguishable by their greatly inferior hardness. It is often cut in facets, and takes a high polish, and the resemblance to the ruby or sapphire group of gems is increased by an occasional six-rayed star seen in the paler and bluer specimens.

Hyacinth is a beautiful orange or scarlet garnet found in Brazil; but it is rare. It is nearly allied to Zircon, which has a deep honey tint. All these stones are comparatively soft, and they are less used now than formerly. As a group they were once valued as a protection against the plague. They are comparatively inexpensive jewels in rings and bracelets.

MOON-STONE, **SUN-STONE**, **amazon-stone**, and other crystalline varieties of the mineral called felspar, deserve notice as gems which occasionally possess a considerable value. The moon-stone is translucent and opaline, sun-stone contains spangles of mica which look yellow like gold in some lights, and amazon-stone is a fine green crystal with a beautiful play of colours. All have a peculiar silky appearance, and are much harder than the somewhat similar varieties of quartz minerals, which we next allude to.

The group of quartz gems includes many varieties of colour, and stones of various degrees of value and interest. Pure quartz, or rock crystal, is rather used to look *through* than to look *at*, although not unknown as an ornament. The lenses of spectacles are made of it, and it is cut into various fanciful forms. Round globes of crystal are the magic spheres in which some gifted seers can learn what is doing at distant spots, and perceive events that have long passed away as if still in progress. They are curiously bound up with the superstitions of the ancient and modern Egyptians. Tinged with colour,

but still clear, the same mineral is called by many names. A rose-coloured variety resembles the ruby—a purple or violet kind is the amethyst. Tinged with brown and yellow, it becomes the cairngorm of Scotland. With a blood or flesh-red colour, passing into orange and yellow, it is known as carnelian, and a rich brown opaque quartz, glittering with golden spangles within its substance, is called aventurine. From its beauty and convenient hardness, carnelian and its varieties are much used by lapidaries, and are brought either cut or uncut from many parts of India, and from Arabia, as well as found in Europe.

Jasper and bloodstone, or heliotrope, consist of quartz, coloured in a more decided manner than the stones just mentioned, the former being altogether opaque, and of a brilliant blood red, while the latter is partially transparent, or translucent, spotted only with opaque red.

Agate may be best described as a mixture of almost all the different varieties of quartz above mentioned. It is partly transparent, partly opaque, and of all colours; often banded, but the bands broken and interrupted; and containing strange figures, representing moss, landscapes with ruins, and angular marks like fortifications, stars, and even human faces. Agates are found abundantly in Scotland, principally near Perth and Dunbar, but also on many parts of the coast of England, amongst the pebbles on the sea-shore. They are still more common at Oberstein, in the Palatinate, not far from the town of Bingen, on the Rhine, and multitudes come from Siberia, Ceylon, and India. From the latter locality especially are obtained the large plates of agate used for manufacturing snuff-boxes and other purposes, and also the pieces used for knife-handles.

The onyx, sardonyx, and chalcedony are banded agates of peculiar kind and considerable interest in the arts, as having been selected for some of the masterpieces of engraving executed by the ancients in the middle ages. Using the word sard as indicating the red or flesh-colour of the carnelian, a sard with a layer or band of white, is considered to be an onyx, and if there be two or more bands of different tints, the same name is still applied. The zones of colour should be very distinct, separate, and strongly marked, and the colours themselves lively and bright. In the sardonyx there is a red zone, in addition to that which forms the true onyx, and the chalcedony is semi-transparent and milky.

In cutting the onyx, the figures are usually sculptured from the white portion, leaving the coloured band as a background, and no little ingenuity is required to select the parts of the stone best adapted for the purpose of the artist. With three or four bands, a wonderful amount of variety may be obtained, so that the hair, beard, and drapery of figures is accurately represented. Fine antiques thus sculptured on the onyx, are of extreme value, and the art of cutting was also carried on in perfection during the middle ages. The works of this kind are called

cameos, and of late years have been imitated by a similar but much easier process of cutting on certain sea-shells.

Besides cameos or raised figures cut on this class of stones by removing part of the upper belt or zone, other beautiful effects have been produced, such as sculpturing complete figures, taking advantage of the peculiarities of the specimens operated on, and still more frequently bold alto-relievos, and deep cuttings beneath the surface, the latter forming intaglios for seals and other purposes. It is impossible to over-estimate the ingenuity and high art exercised in these works, and the demand for them was at one time so great, that onyxes became scarce. Few now carry on the art with success, and thus we must seek for the finest specimens among the antiques or mediæval specimens. One remarkable cameo was cut in the fifteenth century, representing the head of Dejanira, in which the different tints of the stone were made use of to represent in their natural colours the flesh and hair of Dejanira and the lion's skin, while a red streak in the stone, which might otherwise have appeared as a flaw, was so cleverly taken advantage of for the inner side of the lion's skin, that it gave it the appearance of having been recently flayed from the animal. It is especially this adaptation of the treatment of the subject to the peculiarities of the stone, that characterises the glyptic art as a department of sculpture. It is, in fact, the department that treats, whether in relief or intaglio, these banded stones so capriciously moulded by nature, taking a curious advantage of their accidents of structure.

WILD OATS FROM SCOTLAND.

QUAINT pickings fall to the share of readers of old books. Things which successive generations of writers have rendered so familiar, that they seem as if they had always been a part of our inheritance of knowledge, come upon us there in their original form and antiquated dress, so changed from what we have known them, that they are as good as new, and we feel quite sure that the world has vital need to be made acquainted with them. Pitcairn's Scottish Criminal Trials is a mine full of such old "workings." Many a powerfully interesting story may be gathered from them—sad, tender, terrible; but one of the saddest of them all is the trial of Lady Warriston—the young, beautiful, well-born Jeane Levingstoun, of Dunipace.

Jane and her husband, John Kincaid, lived none of the happiest lives together. He was a coarse and cruel man: she, high-spirited and impatient, little able to bear, less to submit, to one without hand or check upon his passions. So their intercourse was for the most part wild, fierce, and angry, and but little of peace or married love was with them. But Jeane had much to bear. The "dittay" setting forth the crime with which her accomplices were charged, incidentally confesses the provocation she received, in showing how she had "consanet ane deidlie

rancour, haitrent, and malice aganis vmo^{le} Johanne Kincaid, of Wariestoun, for the allegit byting of hir in the arme, and streking hir dyuerse tymes." We can scarcely blame her if, with all the pride of her race strong upon her, and her womanly instincts quick to feel and intolerant to endure, she should have conceived this "deadly hatred and malice" against a man who expressed his discontent by biting her in the arm and striking her divers times. Even the law allows of extenuating circumstances, in fact if not in theory, and the Christian can do no less. Wretched Jeane! though one would not advocate husband-murdering as a safe or proper proceeding for discontented wives, yet we cannot be surprised that she got thoroughly tired of her unhappy state, or that she was anxious to end it. After long meditation, Jeane sent for her nurse, Jonet Murdo, told her of her miserable condition, and uttered some wild threats and wishes, which that nurse was only too ready to take up. For Jonet seems to have been a true foster-mother, and to have loved her charge better than anything else under heaven. She soon found a way for her. There was a man in her father's service, a "horse-boy," one Robert Weir, who would do her bidding whatever it might be; cheerfully, too, though it might be murder. Would her bairn speak with him? She knew how all at the old homestead loved her; but none more than Robert Weir, who would shrink from nothing that might do her pleasure. The lady put the offer by for the present, but thought none the less. She hated that rude coarse husband of hers, and would brave a large amount of both sin and danger to be freed from him. But this? Folks do not make up their mind to such a terrible alternative without some hesitating, and many a balancing between their wishes and their fears; yet, at last, she yielded so far as to send word to Robert Weir, by Jonet Murdo, that he might come down and speak with her; and he came, ready to do anything to which she might put him. But Jeane's mind was not yet fully bent to the extreme. She suffered him to come to Warriston once or twice before she had speech of him; but at last, on the "first day of Julij, 1600 yeiris," when she had been perhaps more terribly tried than usual, she gave way to the temptation haunting her, and again spoke to her nurse. "God forgive the nurse," says she, in her confessions, "for she helped me too well in mine evill purpose; and for when I told her that I was minded to do so, she consented to the doing of it: And upon Tuesday, when the turn was done, when I sent her to seek the man who would do it, she said, 'I shall go and seek him; and if I get him not, I shall seek another! And if I get none, I shall do it myself.'" So Jonet Murdo sent to the groom, "desyreing him of new agane to cum downe to hir; quhairto the said Robert granted," and went down to Warriston to confer with Jeane Levingstoun concerning the ill-treatment of her husband. When Jeane had sunk so low—she so stately and high-

bred—as to make this groom the confidant of her sorrows and her humiliation, we may well believe through what a maddening ordeal and trial she had passed; we may well believe, too, that after this all else would be easy. The groom's assurances and offers of faithful devotion struck the last blow. Her pride and reserve had departed, and her pity and her conscience had gone with them; and in a few moments they were speaking openly of the laird's murder, and consulting as to the best manner of committing it. Whatever was to be done must be done effectually. It would be no good for the hand to tremble, or the nerve to quiver: as they had made up their minds to go so far, they must go farther, and make an end of the whole matter. Was life to be endured under such conditions as those in which she lived now, and could he, though only a horse-boy, stand by and see her wronged? This fearful consultation strengthened both in their evil thoughts; and it was finally decided on that John Kincaid should be murdered that night, and by the groom. Then Robert was taken to a "laich seller" (low cellar) "quhairn he abaid quhill mydnycht;" and the lady had to compose herself to the time as best she might.

It was no light thing she had undertaken to do. Lax as were the times, and full of violence and cruelty, such a deed as this would not go unpunished; and between the present hours and midnight, when her husband's life was to be taken, she had full leisure to calculate all the chances of detection that lay before her. She had full leisure, too, to call back to her heart such feelings of pity and patience and womanly tenderness as might have once been there; to extenuate what was vilest in him, to be severe to what was worst in herself; to rouse her better angel, and resist the fiend that was tempting her; to waken up her slumbering conscience, which pride, and passion, and hatred, and revenge had set so fast to sleep. How those weary hours stole on we are not told; but night came at last, and the lady and her husband left the hall, and went to their own chamber—the murderer lying in the darkness beyond. What a time of fearful waiting and watching that must have been! How she must have listened for the muffled footfall, till every faintest noise seemed to carry murder in its echo; how that thick beating of her heart must have sent the blood rushing through her brain, till every sound and sense grew wild and confused; how sick with dread and fear and passionate desire she must have been, waiting and watching, till the terrible footfall came!

One by one the heavy moments passed, and then Robert Weir stole forth out of the "laich cellar" where he had hidden. He passed noiselessly through the hall on to the sleeping-room, "quhair the said vmq^h Johnne was lyand in his bed takand the nychtis rest." The noise awoke the laird, and he sat up, leaning over the side of the bed to see what it was. Then Robert rushed on him, and struck him in the neck a heavy blow, which brought him to the ground

with a terrible cry. Jeane was not so hardened that she could lie there and see her husband murdered before her eyes. She fled into the hall, where she sat all trembling and dismayed, while the cruel work went on in her own sleeping-room, and by the bed where she had lain. She heard her husband's cries, as Robert Weir struck him again and again with his fists and feet, and then all was still; the murderer grasped him tightly by the throat, and held him thus until he died.

Jeane still sat in the hall, when the groom, flushed and breathless, came to her, and told her that the end had come, the deed was done, and she was free for ever from the brutality and passion that had so long oppressed her. And now what they must do—at least what he must do—is to provide for his own safety. She must stay where she was, he said (for she wanted to go with him). "You shall tarry still, and if this matter come not to light, you shall say 'he died in the gallery,' and I shall return to my master's service; but if it be known I shall fly, and take the cryme on me, and none dare pursue you." But they reckoned without their host. Their scheme failed, as so often schemes of like nature fail. The rank of the murdered man, and the situation of the property—Warriston being only one mile from Edinburgh—gave the thing swift and unusual publicity. Weir certainly escaped, for a time, but Lady Warriston and the nurse were taken "red-handed," and put upon their trial forthwith. Indeed, so hurried were all the proceedings, that some of the most necessary formalities were dispensed with, such as serving the "dittay" and a few minor matters. There seems to have been no attempt at defence, and the assize brought in both the culprits "fyllit" of the murder. Short space for shrift or penitence was given to Jeane: for, on the morning of the fifth of July, the terrible last act was played, and a shameful death expiated the guilt of a shameful crime.

The family at Dunipace made no effort for Jeane. She says, in her confessions, that flesh and blood made her to think that her father's "moen" (moyen, influence, interest) at court might have saved her; but the laird of Dunipace had no care for a child who had so disgraced them all; and what "moen" he had was turned to hurrying on the day and hour for her execution, that so the populace might have nothing to gape at, and the disgrace might pass as lightly as possible. Early on Friday morning, and quite before the great city was astir, the young widow, full of penitence and religion, was beheaded in the Canongate. Her conduct seems to have disarmed even the justice of criticism, and to have gained for her commendations which set out of sight the whole heinousness of her offences. An old "tractate" written by Mr. James Balfour, is full of her praises: the author calls her "a constant saint of God," and speaks of her on the morning of her execution as being "ravished with a higher spirit than a man or woman's," though she was "but a wo-

man and a bairn, being the age of 21 years." She showed herself singularly brave and composed; "in the whole way, as she went to the place of execution, she behaved herself so cheerfully, as if she had been going to her wedding and not her death. When she came to the scaffold, and was carried up upon it, she looked up to the maiden with two longsome looks, for she had never seen it before." Even when the terrible moment had really come, and she stood on the scaffold face to face with death, she showed no change, nor did her courage falter. She took a pin out of her mouth to pin the cloth about her face, and laid her neck "sweetly and graciously" in the place appointed, "moving to and fro, till she got a rest for her neck to lay in." And then the bright steel descended. The nurse, and "ane hyrid servant," who were implicated, were burnt that same day; and four years afterwards, Robert Weir met with his fate, and was broken alive upon the wheel.

A plentiful crop of wild oats was harvested all through those early Scottish days; and sternly tempered was the sickle used to cut them down. Death was decreed to persons who had suffered passion to outrun reason, and who loved their neighbours' wives and daughters more zealously than prudently. The law had a special statute for misdemeanors, the very echoes of which have passed away from the present generation. "Forestalling and regrating" were among their severely punished misdemeanors; while shooting with hagbuts or pistolets, "umbesetting the highway," and all other forms of violence, were treated with extreme rigour, and the world was sought to be purged of its fiery and undutiful spirits with a zeal to the full as fiery. One Robert Auchmuttie, "cherurgeane and burges of Edinburghe," slew James Wachepe in single combat; fairly enough, but illegally. Three weeks after he was taken, and put in "ward in tolbuith of Edinburghe," where his doom was pretty certain. But the surgeon thought, wisely enough, that while there was life there was hope, and that he might fight for it yet; so "in the maine tyme of his being of ward, he hang ane clok without the window of the irone hous, and ane wther within the window thair; and saying that he wes seik and might not sie the licht. He had *aqua fortis* continuallie seething at the irone window, quhill at last the irone window was siltime throw; swa spona a morneing, he causit his prentes boy to attend quhen the towne-gaird sould haue dessolvit; at quhilk tyme the boy waitit on, and gaue his maister ane tokine, that the said gaird wer gone, be the schaw or waiff of hes hand curche [handkerchief]. The said Robert hang out a tow [rope] quairhon he thoct to haue comeit doune; the said gaird spyt the waiff of the hand curche; and swa the said Robert was dissappointit of his intentionne and devyse. On the 10 day, he was beheidit at the Croce upone ane scaffolt."

In 1679, Lord Forrester of Corstorphine met with a tragical end. He was an elderly man, of strong Presbyterian views; a very pillar of the

Church according to John Knox, and had even built a meeting-house where the Word could be read and the doctrine preached in harmony with these views. But Lord Forrester, though a pious man, was lax in practice, specially in one thing, whereon, indeed, men of strained views are often notoriously loose. For is there not compensation and the principle of the balance in all things? A certain Mrs. Nimmo, the niece of his first wife, and granddaughter of a former Lord Forrester, stood in delicate relations with him. She was a violent woman, and "ordinarily carried a sword beneath her petticoats," says Lord Fountainhall in his Diary. She came of a violent stock, too; being own cousin to a certain Mrs. Bedford, who had murdered her husband a few years back, after first dishonouring him. Lady Warriston was also her ancestress. So her family history strengthened the force of her family inheritance of crime and passion. Lord Forrester, though her lover, did not really love her. It was one of those cases of chance and opportunity in which lies no spirit of wholesome love. The truth came out one night when drink had made him talkative and rash. He called her an ill name or two, and let the world see his mind so clearly that his companions had no doubt as to the whole matter. Some meddler told this passionate woman with the sword beneath her petticoats, what the Laird of Corstorphine had said of her, and it scarcely needed that she should be urged to avenge herself. She went instantly to Corstorphine, but, finding he was at the village tavern, sent for him, desiring him to come to her. He obeyed, and they met in his own garden. A violent quarrel was ended by the lady, in a paroxysm of rage, stabbing her lover to the heart. "He fell under a tree near the pigeon-house, both of which still remain, and died immediately. The lady took refuge in the garret of the castle, but was discovered by one of her slippers, which fell through a crevice of the floor." She, too, was taken "red-handed" like her ancestress, was brought into Edinburgh, and was arraigned. She confessed, and two days afterwards was sentenced to death. She swore she was about to become a mother, so obtained a two months' grace, until the judges might determine whether her assertion was true or not. During the time, notwithstanding the special care which John Wan, her jailer, took of her, "she made her escape on the twenty-ninth of Sepetmber, in men's apparel, in the gloaming." She got as far as Fala Mills, and there she halted. But destiny and justice were too strong for her; she was overtaken there, and brought back to the dreaded Tolbooth, and that momentary burst of freedom ended in a stronger guard and a stricter keeping. On the twelfth of November she was carried to the Cross at Edinburgh, there to receive the final award: "She was all in mourning, with a large veil, and before the laying down of her head, she laid it off, and put on a whyte taffetic hood, and bared her shoulders with her own hands, with seem-

ing courage enough," and so on the inexorable scaffold expiated her crime, and was beheaded as Jeanne Levingstounne had been.

COUNT ABEL.

THROUGH the woods of Normandy, and past the yellow haunted meres,
Rode Count Abel, at the sunrise, in a girth of fifty spears;

Bright his eye, and broad his forehead; and in many a wrinkled mass

Rolled his tawn hair down his shoulders, like a scarp of shining brass.

Bridal colours, gorgeous favours, knight and swart retainer wore,

And the keen points of their lances twisted rose and lily bore;

Cheerly blew the morning breezes; cheerly, overholt and lea,

Rang the silver-hearted steeples to the bridal company.

As they pricked with jest and laughter through the blasted linden dells,

On the wind there slid the clamours, low and long, of funeral bells,

Solemn wallings, like the noises heard upon a northern shore,

When the grim sea-caves are tideless and the storm strives at their core.

As along the dusky pine-lands in a silent band they spurred,

The bell-throated lamentation louder to the south was heard,

Peals of heart-delivered anguish, seething, steaming to the skies,

Like the writhing smoke uplifted from some mountain sacrifice.

Where a freshet, amber-sided, trickled lightnings through the gorse,

The brave bridegroom, fair Count Abel, turned aside and reined his horse;

Placed his hand within his bosom, and from out his doublet's fold

Slowly drew, with trembling hand, a jewelled disk of ruddy gold.

"Come hither, Bertrand, to my side; come hither, loving trusty knight;

Look, and tell me what thou seest hidden in the locket bright?

By the sword that smote thy shoulders, and the great badge thou dost wear,

Take the trinket in thy palm, and say what thou beholdest there."

"I see the love-lock of thy bride, my gentle sister Madeline;

Whiter than the sea-creek, chafing nightly in the sad moonshine;

Greyer than the sunless snow-drift clinging to the Summer crag—

Greyer than the death-lock gathered from the poll of a strangled hag."

"Then, God shield us, good Sir Bertrand; it was only yesternight,

Once, and twice, and thrice I kissed it in the swinging cresset light,

And I saw it brown and golden as the antlers of the deer,

When their great heads bourgeon, oak-like, in the spring-time of the year."

"Spur on:" they galloped o'er the swarth; they plunged into the roaring ford;

The riders' brows were damp with sweat; the swift strong horses' flanks were gored;

Upon glittering plume and bonnet the hot sun of July shone,

And ever cried the frightened count, "Spur on, spur on, good friends, spur on."

High on the swart ridge of a hill they paused a little space for breath,

The long, green valley of Rennay, with many a brook, sheamed underneath;

A funeral train crept up the slopes, with holy chants, and sacred rights,

With cowl'd priests, and wimpled nuns, and singing clerks and acolytes.

And, in the middle of the train, prone on a bier of satin fair,

Did sleep the Lady Madeline, a white rose in her ashbud hair:

Her sad palms clasped above her breast, in the mute trustfulness of faith,

And on her cheek and on her lids, the mystic presences of death.

With baskets brimmed with rosemary, the passion-blossom of the soul,

Walked three score maidens, scattering flowers, and chanting solemn psalms of dole:

The quick bells tinkled silverly, thick smoked the balm-fed thurifers,

And the great crosses slanted towards the mountain space of sepulchres.

Down rode Count Abel from the group, and reined his horse beside the dead,

Looked in her face, and to her brow he slowly bent his plumed head.

"Tell me, my God," he cried aloud, and sudden dropped the silken rein,

"What foul misdeed assails my soul that thou hast cut my heart in twain?"

Then rising, to the blinded heavens he stretched his hands despairing forth,

Shrieked, reeled aslant his saddle bows, and, falling headlong, smote the earth.

Yet clutched he fondly in his hand the locket rich with jewels fair,

And rounding in its goodly orb the white prophetic lock of hair.

Still up the valley passed the train, with holy chants and pious rites,

With cowl'd priests, and wimpled nuns, and singing clerks and acolytes,

But men avert the lady's eyes did slowly open bright and broad,

And looked, upon the fallen count, sweet pity, and the peace of God.

NORTHERN DOG AND SOUTHERN CAT.

It must never be imagined that slavery is the only real cause of dissension between the Northern and the Southern States of America. It is certainly just at present the primary one; it may even be allowed to be the deepest rooted and longest standing one; but unfortunately it is only the head of a large family.

Far be it from me to write one word that should widen a breach lamentable to all friends of freedom. I mean only to describe from my

own personal knowledge the intense virulence of hatred existing between the Northerners and Southerners, and to try and explain the causes of its existence. I only regret that I have had too certain proofs of such a hatred existing, and of its being deep as ever raging between Saxon thane and Norman knight, Irish chieftain and English baron, Jacobite Highlander and English soldier. I think it is not a difference arising from religious feeling, though no Puritan and Cavalier could hate each other more cordially, for America is a country where toleration on such matters is really practised as well as talked about, but it arises from reasons of climate, and more especially from trade jealousies. But I will first attempt to prove the existence of this hatred, and the deep root it has taken.

It is a burning day in Washington; the great marble and stone public buildings in the wide avenue leading from the White House to the Capitol, glare; the white dust of the road dazzles; the sky is molten blue; everything but the ice in the sherry-cobblers is melting, or blazing, or blistering. As for the Potomac river, it seems in a sort of golden seethe of heat and sunshine, and its fish must, I am sure, be swimming about half boiled. Sick to death of the incessant tat-tatting of the electric telegraph indicator in the reading-room of the vast hotel, I resolve to go and hear a debate up in the Capitol: having been promised a seat in the gallery, whenever I want one, by my friend Mr. Cassius Quattlebom, of Virginia.

I escape from the white glare of the great wide avenue of Washington, as I pass the iron gates and enter the Capitol Gardens, where the trees cast a pleasant dancing shadow on the path, and the first yellow leaves blow about the turf. Some kindly ugly negress nurses, with fragile American children, are sitting in the shade, doing nothing, and enjoying the nothing that they do, as only negresses and children can. I pass up the gentle ascent, and mount the great steps leading to the noble building whose enormous iron dome crowns the height above the city. I enter the door, pass through the great hall with its circular tapestry of historical pictures, and, by various passages and vestibules at last reach the gallery to which the public are admitted. It seats more than double the number of "strangers" which our own inhospitable House of Commons accommodates. The ladies, I observe, are singularly pale and flaccid in complexion—partly the result of this exhausting and blood-draining heat, partly the result of want of exercise and unwholesome diet—but are often of an exquisite though rather fragile beauty—the beauty of the tropical hot-house flower, rather than of the hardy English rosebud. I cannot, in justice, say that they are well dressed, for they seem to me always to have too much or too little on. There is a good deal of profuse ill-adapted French finery, and a good deal of the better sort of English mechanic's wife dowdiness. They all wear the new bonnet arched over the forehead, with room enough for a large nosegay between the head and the arch. They are all, too, I observe,

rather strong-minded in manner, and seem trying to express their stern opinion that man is a weed of creation. They receive all politeness, I remark, as a right wrung from man: not as a homage voluntarily yielded.

The men are feverishly energetic and nervously acute—nearly all nerve, in fact, and very little muscle. (You scarcely ever see an old man in American out-door life, yet all the young look old.) They look anxious, excitable, not very healthy. They all wear that horrid mechanic-looking best black suit, exaggerated gold chains, and wrinkly black satin "vest." The spectators make a very loud noise when they like a speaker, and a still louder noise when they don't like him. That grey-eyed quiet man with the clear brown skin and grave grey eyes, is a New Englander; that rather wealthy-looking and self-assertive man, with the enormous gold hatband, watch chain and seals, is a Southern planter from St. Louis. That loquacious parrot-nosed man in the corner, sentineled between two ladies, is a French sugar-grower from the further Louisiana.

And what is the debate about? Slavery, of course. To-day, the weather is tolerably mild. No honourable gentleman, while he tosses about in debate, does, as of aforetime, unfortunately drop a revolver from his pocket, and so very nearly cause a general fight between the North and South; no honourable gentleman threatens to hang Mr. Lovejoy higher than John Brown, if he dare set his foot in Charleston—as he threatened three weeks since; no Northern member, either, vociferating too near the Southern benches, is warned with brandished sticks—as happened not many months since; but there is something going on which is equally ominous, and that is an episcodical discussion on the famous anti-slavery book, written by Helper, of North Carolina, called "The Impending Crisis," and which has circulated by hundreds of thousands. The Northern members have been trying to get the House to encourage the circulation of this book, and the Southern members are therefore wild with rage.

The book is not a conciliating book, as the Honourable Epaminondas Twigs has just been reading extracts to show. It advocates, as the great means of destroying slavery, "no more patronage to pro-slavery merchants;" "no more going to slave-waiting hotels;" "no affiliations in society with slaveholders;" "no fees to pro-slavery lawyers;" "no employment of pro-slavery physicians;" "no audience to pro-slavery parsons;" "no fellowship in religion with pro-slavery politicians;" and an "abrupt discontinuance of subscriptions to pro-slavery newspapers."

The gallery boils over at these threats, and I really begin to fear a charge will be made on the Northern benches by the Southern chivalry. Half a dozen more Southerners are preparing to follow the speaker now on his legs—and a singular noise is produced by members clapping their thighs, in the Eastern way, for the "page-boys," who bring them fresh pens and paper. But I see no whittling of desks, and only a little surreptitious tobacco-chewing and spitting.

As I complain of the heat, an American next me tells me that it is nothing to what it is at certain debates, when he has seen thirteen hundred people in the strangers' gallery.

But the agitation is greatest and most ir- restrainable when the speaker goes on to quote the more violent and threatening parts of the Helper book, which certainly does not breathe much of the spirit of that great Teacher who said, "Be merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful," and which shows clearly to me that if the South is ready to fight, the North is willing to strike, and that the fiery chivalry of the one is pretty well balanced by the fanatic intolerance of the other. I made a note on the spot, not being unaccustomed to short-hand, of two of the most violent passages; and here they are:

"And if it comes to blood, *let blood come*. No, Sir, if that issue must come, let it come, and it cannot come too soon. Sir, Puritan blood has not always shrunk from such encounters. When the war has been proclaimed with the knife, and the knife to the hilt, the steel has sometimes glistened in their hand."

And again:

"Against this army, for the defence and propagation of slavery, we think it will be an easy matter, independent of the negroes, who, in nine cases out of ten, would be delighted with an opportunity to *cut their masters' throats*."

Fresh murmurs of indignation from the Southerners in the gallery. The speaker concludes by tauntingly asking if these are the speeches of the cold Christian Northerners, the hard-grinding business men, whose god was the almighty dollar; and ends by quoting a most fiery passage from the Olive Branch—one of the hottest-blooded ephemerals I think I ever read, and which ought to be printed on cartridge paper, so combustible is it.

The next speaker, also a Southern, convinces me more and more of the hatred of North and South. He reads from the New Orleans Christian Advocate, a passage aimed entirely at the North, which he loudly praises. The gist of it is this bit:

"Southern slavery (as a rule) is the *mildest* and most benevolent system of labour in the world, and the slaves, without (Northern) abolition-tempters are the most happy and contented labourers. It is, in comparison with serfdom, most saintly and holy. There is not one evil to character and home, to society or country, attributed to slavery, that abolitionism does not produce a hundred-fold."

A third speaker, a stout portly bilious man, with an oily manner, goes higher up the pole than all the rest. He especially urges the divine institution of slavery, and the propriety of diffusing its blessings over all the world.

But I must pass to other scenes, for this is only one glimpse of the aspect of the unnatural and fratricidal hatred. I am now on an Ohio river steamer, gliding down, at sunset, between the vineyards that garland Cincinnati. Half a dozen of us are up circling the funnel on the third and uppermost deck, for the evening is chilly.

I see no faces, for it is getting dusk, except every now and then when a lighted cigar fusee illuminates a Southern face. My friends, all pro-slavery men (for all of a sudden I appear to have no special opinion on the subject), are evidently discussing the impending crisis, and are telling their real minds, unconscious of a lurking enemy. They are all well-educated, travelled, intelligent men, and possessed of the latest information on the prospect of a severance.

A red speck opposite me says suddenly, in an explosive way,

"Thunder! If I wouldn't make it a law to hang the first all-fired Northern Yankee that dare set his foot in a slave state—yes, siree, I would!"

A second red speck, warming to this, mentions with great exultation that the Texans have just been hanging a Methodist preacher for putting the slaves up to poison the wells.

"Jee-wilkins!" says a third hot cigar. "If I could only catch a Yankee 'litionist talking to my slaves, I'd *nigger* him, and feather him too!"

First cigar now vapours a good deal about the Palmetto regiments organising in Charleston, and about the gunpowder Alabama is laying in store:

"It'll be a big fight, it'll be a rough-and-tumble fight, misters!"

No. 2 cigar is evidently an older man than the rest, he grows cautious.

"I tell you what, gentlemen," he says, as he moves his chair back to get up and go below, for it is almost time to turn in for the night—"if we go out, what will *eventuate* will be that we shall be just *whipped back* again as we have been before. The North has the fleet and the army, the arsenals, the stores, the ports. How can we live without the North? It's all folly this big talk. What do we grow our cotton for? Why, to sell to the North. Who works it up for us? Why, the North. We can't move or breathe without the North, or they without us. We sell what they buy, we grow what they manufacture. It's so; we go, and they whip us back again. Good night, gentlemen all!"

This conversation I select from hundreds of others, because it points to a deeper source of quarrel between North and South than even slavery, and that is *trade jealousy*.

The South is far before the North in political economy. The Northerners are Protectionists, the Southerners Free-traders. There has long been a growing feeling among the cotton growers that it would be cheaper for them to send their raw cotton straight to Manchester to be manufactured, and to have it back in the made-up form, than to send it North to the New England mills. Several of the largest cotton growers round New Orleans told me that they would rather do this than put money into a hated Yankee's pocket. (By a "Yankee," an American always means a New Englander.) They swore they would starve out the damned Northerners in two years. On my pressing them to tell me what were the peculiarly hateful features of the Northerner, they described them as an incurable unceasing greed for dollars, a cold

rude sanctimoniousness, a jealousy and hatred of everything Southern, a dulness, and a—I do not know what else.

When I went Boston way again, and innocently asked the same question of the Northerner, he said :

"The Southerners are lazy braggers, slave-holders, and enemies of improvement; they have no stamina; they let you English burn Washington in the last war; they are bloodthirsty duellists, but they have no endurance in fighting; they are clever tall talkers, but they won't do much."

The Northern papers are always exulting over the commercial wealth of the North, and are yet, as the South asserts, always betraying a jealousy of the natural advantages of the slave states. The North has marble and iron, the South is an unfading Eden; the energy is North, the good land is South; the education is chiefly North, yet the South asserts that all the best genius and all the best eloquence spring up without cultivation in the slave states, under their fiercer climate and more careless life.

The Northern papers say the annual mineral product of the North is, compared to the South, as eighty-five millions of dollars to twelve millions of dollars. The free states, with all their frost, and snow, and meagre sun, are worth, it is said, thirty-five hundred million dollars more than the slave states. The monthly sale of sweet milk alone in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, amounts to more than the whole annual value of all the rosin, tar, pitch, and turpentine, produced in the Southern States. Every figure in these statistics pierces the Southern men like a poisoned bullet. It galls him to be told the truth, that the wharfs of Baltimore and Richmond groan with piles of Northern timber; that the clippers and steamers of Charleston are built in the North; that the vehicles, axe-helves, walking-canes, the very clothes-pins and penholders of the South, come from the North; that the great timber buildings and warehouses of Savannah and Charleston are built with Northern timber, while the Southern men burn down their forests merely to clear the ground for their cotton. The Northern hay consumed in a single slave state, costs seven millions and seventy-five thousand dollars a year. The South gets her school-books from the North and nearly all her clothing. Indeed, only a day or two before I left America, I read a speech delivered by a Mr. Paul Cameron before an agricultural society in Orange County, North Carolina, that acknowledged much of this with bitter shame. The speaker (a Southern man, mind), addressing Southern men, said—and we see Helper has since seized it and hurled it back at the South—"I know not when I have been more humiliated, as a North Carolina farmer, than a few weeks ago at a railway dépôt, at the very doors of our State capital, seeing waggons drawn by Kentucky mules loading with Northern hay, for the supply not only of the towns, but also to be taken into the country. Such a sight in the capital of a State whose population is almost

exclusively agricultural, is a most humiliating exhibition. *Let us cease to use everything*, as far as it is practicable, that is not the product of our own soil and workshops; not an axe, or broom, or bucket, from Connecticut. By every consideration of self-preservation we are called on to make better efforts to expel the Northern grocer from the State with his butter, and the Ohio and Kentucky horse, mule, and hog driver from our county at least. It is a reproach on us farmers, and no little deduction from our wealth, that we suffer all the populations of our towns and villages to supply themselves with butter from another Orange county in New York."

Here you see a Southerner, in the words "Let us cease to use everything Northern," expressing the Southern dislike in a new form.

As for Helper, he goes to the extent of clearly proving that, so far from the South being pre-eminent in agriculture or agricultural wealth, the hay crop alone of the free states is worth more by three million dollars a year than all the cotton, tobacco, rice, hay, hemp, and cane sugar, annually produced in the fifteen slave states. He says that one acre of land near Baltimore will produce fifty dollars' worth of hay a year, while in some parts of Carolina the cotton is not worth more than twelve dollars per acre. The slave state land is soon exhausted by perpetual unmanured crops of the same plant. Judging by the bushel measure, that scorns to lie, the Northerners challenge the South to refute the great fact that their fields produce more a year by some seventeen million bushels. The New York papers actually calculate that the free states are worth at least some three thousand five hundred millions of dollars more than the slave states.

The South, too, is galled by the constant reflection that, half a century ago, Virginia was the Empire state; that once, Pennsylvania went to Charleston to buy her drab cloths and lavender silks; that the great man who helped to found Lowell was driven out of Richmond by the slaveholders; that Philadelphia city alone contains a population greater than that of the whole free population of Eastern Virginia. The Southerners are taunted with the rapid and dangerous increase of their negro population, and by the progressive inroads of freedom.

You cannot, indeed, travel a mile in the South without seeing some demonstration of the old hatred. For days in Alabama I myself was shunned because I was taken for a New Yorker. The first *feuilleton* I read in a Southern paper described the hero in a railway carriage, entering into conversation with a fellow-passenger, and falling into silence as soon as he found that he was a Northerner.

Still, I hope that the majority of North and South dread a war that must be bloody, fratricidal, inhuman, and anti-Christian—that must be terrible in its immediate consequences, and ruinous in its ultimate results. It is easy to wound, but it is slow to cure. Warehouses will be burnt, sea-ports stopped, markets depressed. Firms will drop into bankruptcy like beech-nuts on a windy

day. The palsy felt in New Orleans will be paralysis at New York. Slavery requires no sword to kill it. It is fast passing away; and it has been proved unprofitable. If the slavers could be really kept from perpetually landing fresh negroes in New Orleans, the existing race might work its younger members free after a given time, and the older slaves might die off by degrees, harmless and contented with the good time coming for their children.

A WILL OF HIS OWN.

HE has been dead many years. While upon earth, and residing in this pleasant land of England, he took it into his head, as many have done before, but perhaps in a different sense, to have a will of his own. And he had it—unfortunately for others.

He was what the world calls pretty well to do, and had something to leave. He thought it was very hard to leave it, and to be bowled out so soon; but he and his relations differed in that respect; and, as he had had a pretty good innings and had made a respectable score, they rather thought that it was time he was out; whether bowled, or stumped, or caught out, they were not particular.

Well, he had something to leave, and, however loth to leave it, he had long thought it proper and respectable to make a will; and after going through all the gradations of intending, and promising, and resolving, and determining to do the thing, and doing it and undoing it, and half doing it, at last, when there was hardly time to do it at all, he actually did do it—unfortunately, let it be said again, for those who might have profited and thanked him if he had only done it sensibly, as such and all other matters of business of importance should be done.

He thought while he was in health and spirits that there was plenty of time; and even when at times a little out of sorts, he didn't like the idea of making a confidant of an attorney—a race he had always detested the very name of—and so he put the thing off. No such confidence was needed. He need not have told the attorney anything about his property or affairs, but might have told him what he wanted done, and have left him to do it—just as he might have ordered his tailor to make a coat of any given pattern, or any peculiar colour. He couldn't make a coat he knew; but he took it into his head that he *could* make a will.

There was no time to lose; little time for thought, none for revision. The will was written, signed, and sealed. Even then he hardly liked to let the people about him know what he was doing: not that he was exactly ashamed or afraid; but he didn't like to do it, and didn't like people to know that he was doing it, so he did it half upon the sly, and, having done it, felt as if he had done a foolish thing. Then he thought he had not done it quite as he ought to have done, and tried to undo it; made some alterations and additions, added codicils, then revoked them; and in the midst of the hurly-burly—he died.

The first appearance of this will of his own was in that dark and dreary region known as Doctors' Commons. Why so called the writer knows not—whether in connexion with the doctors whose patients wander there, or the short commons the suitors are supposed to get in the judicial way in that locality. There, his unfortunate will appeared, and scurvily it fared.

The law, it seemed, required two witnesses, not only to the will, but to every alteration of it. The witnesses must also be present when the will is signed, and must attest the will in a certain form. In every one of these particulars grave doubts arose—interminable allegations and interrogations were drawn, written out, filed, copied, paid for—everything but read. Then came long and prosy speeches, then a sleepy judgment, wherein the old gentleman on the bench proclaimed that he wondered how any testator in his senses could so have confused all rules and forms so necessary to be observed in making wills—rules established for the protection of the public, and so forth, and that on almost every point doubt and difficulty had arisen. As to the absurdities glaring forth out of the wills and codicils themselves he should not express any opinion, but must leave other tribunals to settle those points as they best could. His only duty was to declare which paper could be admitted to probate, and which not, and which alterations could be adopted and which rejected. This he proceeded to do, declaring null, all the testator's favourite provisions, and establishing all that he had intended to revoke. Then came the decision as to costs, which were to come out of the estate, with another complaint from the old gentleman on the bench, who said that if testators would occasion such confusion by the absurd parsimony of not having the benefit of professional advice, or by still more absurdly postponing such serious business until it was too late, what could the court do but saddle the estate with all the costs?

Like other foolish gentlemen, he had sought to what is called "tie up" his property; which means that, having had his full enjoyment of it, he was determined no one else should have it so long as he could keep them out of it; and he gave life interests, and interests to children's children, and fixed distant periods for their coming into possession. He had also determined, if possible, to give chance no chance, and he attempted to provide for every event in every family that should succeed to any of his property.

But, besides all this, when he had that will of his own, he must needs do something in the cheap charitable line. He must make atonement, as it were, for what he would not give when it reduced his store, to give to charity what reduced the store of others. He must found schools, and build churches, and enrich hospitals, or aid in doing so; and he fell deeply into the snare of mortmain acts and superstitious uses.

The next appearance of this unfortunate will of his own was in the Court of Chancery. Bills, answers, pleas, demurrers, and exceptions; then

orders, decrees, arrests and inquiries, occupied reams of paper, myriads of words, days of speechifying, and years of time. Heartaches and hopes deferred the court takes no account of, and make no inquiry about.

An issue concerning this wretched will of his own, was directed for a jury to try, and a question of law was reserved for the judges to determine. The cause came on, counsel were heard the jury were locked up because they could not agree on the point of fact, and were discharged. The judges gave their opinion on the point of law, which gave his property to the very person he had emphatically declared should by no means have it; and so the case came back again to the pleasant avenues of the same High Court of Chancery.

The sense he missed his poor relations found at last. A compromise is proposed, and all parties agree to put an end to further litigation by doing away with his will altogether, and dividing the property amongst themselves. Where there is no will, the law steps in and generally makes a very sensible one. So ends the matter in the final and complete break-down and failure of his ridiculous attempt to have a will of his own.

COSTLY FOOD FOR FISHES.

If Doctor Johnson were alive at the present moment, and were required to give a definition of a submarine telegraphic cable, we are afraid that some very bitter epigrammatic sentence would be put upon record. The man who described a fishing-rod as a stick with a worm at one end and a fool at the other, could hardly be scientifically precise, or decently amiable, when speaking of such failures as the Atlantic and Red Sea cables. The contemplation of so much capital sunk or destroyed, of so much advancement checked, would scarcely be calculated to decrease a certain biliousness of thought, or to soften a certain irritability of language. The temptation to look upon a submarine cable as a rope with many hungry destructive worms at one end, and many blind, trusting capitalists at the other, would certainly be too great. It is well, perhaps, for the battered cause of submarine telegraphy, that Doctor Johnson has not to "define" its aims in a single sentence.

The most unprejudiced observer or inquirer, however, who has no desire to appear smart at the expense of truth, will feel an uncontrollable desire to lose his temper when dealing with submarine telegraphs. He will see a most difficult application of a mysterious science, made more difficult, if not impossible, by contracting leeches and "intermediate" interests. He will find that slop-work is the rule and not the exception; and that every advantage is taken of natural checks and hindrances. The antagonism of the elements is used as a shield to cover the most clumsy and ignorant processes; and the true causes of failure are artfully concealed under the inevitable hocus-pocus of such undertakings. Because a cable, containing a gigantic capital in wire and

coating, has to be laid in the bed of the sea, it seems to be assumed that it must necessarily be a wreck. The whole process of laying submarine telegraphic cables is apparently regarded as a ceremony required to satisfy the minds of a few amiable scientific enthusiasts; and, therefore, the least spent upon it, the soonest mended. The plan is so arranged that what is entrusted to the fishes shall bear but a small proportion to what is devoured by the land-sharks in the shape of "preliminary" and "incidental" expenses. Of the eighty thousand pounds sterling paid up by the shareholders for the Dover and Ostend line, only thirty-three thousand pounds, or about two-fifths, have been devoted to the cable; and this is waste compared with the stricter economy shown in the line from Dover to Calais. There, only one-fifth of the capital has been cast overboard; for, out of seventy-five thousand pounds sterling paid up, only fifteen thousand pounds have been sunk in the Channel cable. When we find this evident distrust of the treacherous element operating so largely on the minds of telegraphic projectors and managers, we can hardly feel surprised that out of nine thousand miles of submarine telegraph laid down, not more than three thousand miles can be said to be in working order, the remaining six thousand miles being perfectly useless.

One of the principal scientific causes of failure is to be found in the fact that telegraphic cables have never been thoroughly tested under water before they have been deposited in the ocean. The first considerable failure of a submarine cable was that of the Atlantic Telegraph Company. Before this property was thrown into the sea, it was often strongly urged by the Institution of Civil Engineers, that the cable should be tested during its manufacture, and that it should not be laid until it had been tested under water as nearly as possible under the conditions to which it would be subjected in the ocean. In violation of all these precautions the cable was laid, with the conviction of its not being in a perfect state; a capital of three hundred thousand pounds sterling was sunk; and the cause of electric telegraphy was seriously jeopardised.

That some mischance should happen to the Atlantic cable was not surprising, when the limited experience then obtained in submarine telegraphy in deep water is taken into account. This, however, is the chief scientific defence that can be set up on the side of the directors and managers. The moral causes of the failure are more apparent and less defensible. The details were arranged before anything was practically known about deep sea cables. Great mistakes were made in organising the undertaking,—the radical fault being the precipitate manner in which the contracts were let,—precluding any preliminary experiments.

The gross failure of the Atlantic Telegraph—or, as some prefer to say, in elastic language, the lesson taught us by this magnificent experiment,—has been cast into the shade by the failure of the Red Sea Telegraph. This second

"magnificent experiment" is a phantom in the sea; but a very solid reality upon the earth. It has gone down with eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, as costly food for fishes; but it has left its mark in the national account-books. The country is saddled with thirty-six thousand pounds per annum for half a century (a guaranteed dividend of four and a half per cent per annum, upon the before-mentioned capital), representing an amount of nearly two millions sterling, even if we say nothing about compound interest. The contract for this half-hidden monument of official folly was so recklessly made, that no one—not even the usual "man of straw"—is fixed with any responsibility. The details of the scheme set forth that the cable was to be divided into six sections—three in the Red Sea—Suez to Kossier, 254 knots; Kossier to Suakin, 475 knots; and Suakin to Aden, 630 knots; or, in all, 1359 knots of direct distance; and three in the Indian Ocean—Aden to the Kooria-Mooria Islands, 716 knots; Kooria-Mooria to Muscat, 486 knots; and Muscat to Kurrachee, 481 knots; or, in all, 1683 knots: making the total length of the two lines, 3042 knots. Messages had been transmitted between Suez and Aden for about nine months, and separate sections of this line had been worked for eighteen months. The line from Aden to Kurrachee had also been worked, by means of translation, at very good speed; but the whole distance from Suez to Kurrachee was never worked throughout. If, however, for Suez we read Stock Exchange, and for Kurrachee, we substitute Downing-street, we shall obtain very different results. The whole distance between these two latter important points was worked with most marvellous success. The laying down, or "paying out" (a most significant phrase in the present instance), was without a flaw; the messages sent were duly received, and duly recorded, docketed, and pigeon-holed, after the fashion of red-tape. The clerical work was absolutely faultless, as the letter-books, diaries, and Treasury minutes will show; but beyond this the business presents a fog-bank—a dreary waste. The barren ceremony of manufacturing and submerging the cable might have been shuffled through, even more unsatisfactorily than it was, for any active superintendence that the government gave to the undertaking. They guaranteed the dividend; or, in other words, they gave away the public money, and there they seem to have fancied that their duty began and ended. Government made a subsequent attempt to wriggle out of its own agreement, and was only called to a sense of its duty by the higher moral sense of the country.

The real secret history of this Red Sea failure will most probably never be written, because it is not likely that any individual or journal unfortified by exceptional profits on a telegraphic contract, will brave the costly and uncertain law of libel. One Blue-book has added a little to our knowledge of these submarine transactions, and another promises to inform us further; but as the

chief actor in the Red Sea farce, MR. LIONEL GISBORNE, is dead, an important tap of evidence is necessarily frozen up. In the mean time, we use the narrative contained in Mr. CHARLES MANBY's very able summary of a long and important discussion at the Institution of Civil Engineers on this subject.

In the year 1855, application was made to Messrs. Glass and Elliot by the late Mr. Lionel Gisborne—better known, perhaps, as the government engineer who surveyed the Isthmus of Panama, and forgot to mention the mountains—who represented himself as acting under the authority of her Majesty's government, for information to enable him to prepare estimates for a telegraphic line to the East. On his assurance (we are quoting Messrs. Glass and Elliot's words) that the firm to whom he applied should be placed in a position to tender for the execution of the work, when he had completed certain arrangements with the Turkish government, the necessary information was given him, accompanied by specimens of submarine cables. Upon this, Mr. Gisborne proceeded to Constantinople, and obtained the necessary firman from the Sultan to lay down the Red Sea line. Shortly after his return to England, these concessions were placed at the disposal of a body of gentlemen, who formed themselves into a company—the Red Sea Telegraph Company—for the purpose of laying down the lines. In the month of August, 1857, the directors of the company called upon Messrs. Glass and Elliot for information, and to ask that firm to tender for the execution of the whole, or one half of the line. The required information was furnished, and a prospectus, founded on Messrs. Glass and Elliot's estimates, was issued to the public. As certain statements, however, appeared in the public journals, to the effect that it was impossible to lay a cable in the Red Sea, from its great depth, and other causes, an insufficient amount of capital was subscribed, and the project flagged.

In this state of things, Messrs. Glass and Elliot suggested an application to government to cause a survey to be made, with a view of testing the truth of these statements. This course was adopted, and the Cyclops was ordered on the expedition, and instructions, forwarded, on the firm's suggestion, to the Admiralty, through the hydrographer, were sent out to the officers in command of the ship. The result of the survey having been considered satisfactory, a fresh attempt was made by the directors to carry out the line. The undertaking had not proceeded further, before it was found that the agreement between Mr. Gisborne and the directors of the Red Sea Telegraph Company had lapsed by a few days; and on being called upon to renew it, he consented, but insisted that in addition to the fifteen thousand pounds agreed to be paid to him as consideration for the "concessions," he should be appointed engineer to the company, and that the whole of the work should be given to Messrs. Newall

and Co., without tender, on the ground that that firm had become interested with him in the concessions. The company were thus saddled with an engineer and a contractor as part of the "concession;" practically, the form of the cable was decided upon, and little remained for the board to do but to pay. With these private and confidential arrangements, it is not surprising that unprotected iron wire, scarcely larger than bell-wire, was used for the covering of the cable, although there was abundance of experience to prove that, after being only a few months in the sea, it would become so rusted, that when repairs were necessary, it would be impossible to lift it to the surface. It is not surprising that such close contract was taken for a lump sum, thereby offering a premium upon the chances of saving some part of the slack or surplus cable; and so causing the fractures attributed to the tightness with which the cable was laid.

Ruinous as this private and confidential contract arrangement was, the directors of the company felt that no other course was left open to them than to make the best of it; and they therefore held together, and supported their engineer and contractor. The rival contractors—Messrs. Glass and Elliot—on seeing the estimates of Messrs. Newall and Co.—approved, of course, by Mr. Gisborne—to carry out the work for a sum of six hundred and fifty thousand pounds, or thereabouts, offered to carry out similar work for ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS LESS. Their offer was not accepted, their claims upon the undertaking were ignored, and the Treasury were led to believe by the directors, that the work was laid out in the surest manner to lead to success. The warning addressed by Messrs. Glass and Elliot to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, dated June 26th, 1858, was only answered by a Treasury minute of the usual stamp, dated August 4th, 1858. As it shows the nominal character of the supervision exercised by the government over the undertaking, we present the document entire:

"Inform Messrs. Glass, Elliot, and Company, that my lords have made an arrangement with the Red Sea Telegraph Company, by which, on certain conditions, a guarantee on the part of her Majesty's government is granted to that company.

"It is one of the conditions in the arrangement, that the line of telegraph shall be laid down on the responsibility of the company; my lords do not propose to interfere in the selection of the parties who are to execute the work, further than to see that its proper execution is sufficiently secured. My lords have no doubt that the company will adopt the proper means of procuring contracts for the execution of the work on the best terms, and can only refer Messrs. Glass, Elliot, and Co. to the directors of the company."

The directors were immovable, and they comforted themselves and the Treasury with the belief that "the early and satisfactory completion of the enterprise would be most effectually promoted by the selection of the contractors who combined

the highest reputation," &c. &c. &c. What they meant by "selection of contractors," is not quite clear, when it was notorious that only one contractor was forced upon them; but as their policy was to get the government guarantee at all hazards, we can hardly feel surprised at the tone of their communications with the authorities. In their contempt for the saving of one hundred thousand pounds, the directors of the company seem to have caught the infectious liberality of our imperial expenditure. The maxim that the ship should never be spoilt (although it invariably is spoilt) for a hundred thousand pounds worth of tar, which is so familiar to "my lords," as they delight to style themselves, is not often the guiding principle of cautious mercantile bodies, who work with a fear of the Court of Bankruptcy before their eyes. But, to do the Treasury justice, one of "my lords"—Lord Stanley—seems to have grown uneasy about this hole and corner contract, some two months after the official minute, just quoted, was recorded. To his credit, he complained, through the usual secretary, in the usual form, that the system of competition was not resorted to.

A contract, huddled up as this was, pointed to failure from the beginning, and turned the concession of the Turkish government into a barren permission to throw certain vast sums of public money into certain Oriental seas. It provided that the laying of the cable should be left entirely in the hands of the contractors, and so absolved the engineers of the company from all responsibility. Failures in the line declared themselves almost immediately, and a vessel was engaged for one hundred and eighty-two days in abortive attempts to repair one hundred and eighty-four miles of cable.

The scientific, mechanical, and natural enemies of telegraphic enterprise, do not seem to be half as formidable as its moral enemies. Gutta-serena—the present popular material for what is called the insulating medium, or covering necessary to protect the wire from air and water—may be difficult to manufacture entirely free from small cavities; currents may be troublesome in washing these specks of bad workmanship into gaping holes; sharp rocks, hungry fishes; too much tightness in laying the cable producing fractures; or too much slackness producing "kinks," or tangles; rigid instead of elastic machinery for paying out the cable; storms, which come on just at the critical moment of the paying-out process, forcibly dividing the paying-out ships from their long tail of cable; a want of careful submarine surveys; variations in temperature, not known or provided for, which melt the insulating medium; the action of sea-water upon the outer iron covering of cables; ships' anchors; movements of the sea; antagonistic vegetation gathering round the cable; gas currents; want of sufficient thickness in the cable; and a dozen other defects and opposing forces may silently and rapidly convert a great undertaking into a hopeless wreck. These are powerful opponents that

have to be met with skill and judgment, but, before they are conquered, other enemies have to be guarded against. The insulation of the conducting wire may be brought to absolute perfection, but this will avail little unless the insulation of contractors and jobbing concessionists is also attended to. Of all destroying agencies against which an electric telegraph may have to contend, there is not one that will be found so destructive as a commission agency. Gold is a great misconductor in these cases, a sort of metallic covering that is sure to be spread over a multitude of flaws. A per-centage upon economy of scientific and mechanical outlay, in a cable intended for shallow governments rather than for shallow waters, is apt to produce a belief that gingerbread may serve as an excellent insulating medium. Government assistance, in the shape of a financial guarantee, can hardly be dispensed with in such speculative and international undertakings; although the lullaby patronage of the official mind is dearly bought, even at thirty-six thousand pounds per annum. The only safe course which presents itself to practical men in connexion with submarine telegraphs, is simply to deal with contractors known to be responsible and trustworthy, to pay them a sum not exceeding the actual cost of the cable, and to allow a certain liberal per-centage for its use during the time that it actually remains in working order. Under such conditions, there appears to be no reason to despair of the success of submarine telegraphy.

DOLLS' COFFINS.

THE parlour of the North Star was occupied by a company more numerous than usual, and discussion was more than ordinarily animated. The parties assembled, whom we shall distinguish not by names, but by characteristic epithets, were ranged on a bench, which, attached to the walls, surrounded the entire room. Of this bench a portion sufficient for the accommodation of a single individual was marked off by a pair of wooden arms, and the seat thus separated was filled by the Chairman of the evening—a venerable man, in whose countenance might be traced the signs of innate beneficence, heightened by the mildly spirituous potations with which London shopkeepers of the lower grade are wont to refresh themselves when the profitable toils of the day are over. It must not be supposed that because the meeting had a Chairman, it in any way performed the functions of an harmonious assembly, or of a discussion forum. No song or recitation was called for or expected; no subject was proposed for debate; but everybody present talked precisely as he pleased, and without the slightest regard to the pleasure of the rest. The Chairman, himself, far from being a despot, was not even a constitutional monarch. He could officially call nobody to order; he had no originating power in the business of the evening. His seat had arms, his cushion was raised some three inches higher than the com-

mon level. Herein consisted his sole official distinction. Whatever authority he exercised over his less privileged companions was to be ascribed, not to his office, but to the weight of his personal character,—to the force of his mild persuasive wisdom.

The discussion in the parlour of the North Star, while it had become louder and louder, had at the same time become more abstract with respect to its theme. One of the speakers whom we shall call the Positive, had ventured to assert that he differed from another, whom we shall call the Negative, IN PRINCIPLE.

The Negative, instead of pursuing the argument according to its natural course, gave it a new turn. "I differ from you in principle, do I?" said he. "How do you know that? I defy you to tell me what a principle is." And, cocking his hat on one side, and sending forth a tobacco-cloud of extraordinary volume, he cast his eye triumphantly round the company, who gasped for the definition that this challenge might elicit.

"I should think," replied the Positive, flinching a little, but concealing his fears of defeat under a cloak of superciliousness, "I should think every fool knew what a principle was."

"Should you? Then, I shouldn't," tartly retorted the Negative; "for I could mention a fool who knows nothing about the matter."

"You had him then,—no mistake about that," murmured an interlocutor whom we shall call the Unctuous, with an approving chuckle; and this opinion was confirmed by the laugh in which all the company joined, save the vanquished Positive and the beneficent Chairman, who, sighing and raising his eyes to the ceiling, seemed to think that the wit of the repartee, brilliant as it was, scarcely excused the pungency of the sarcasm.

"Jokes ain't arguments," grumbled the Positive, when the laugh had subsided.

"No, they ain't, that's true enough; but some people's arguments are very like jokes," thundered the triumphant Negative, following up his victory, amid renewed shouts of laughter.

"I think you had better shut up," suggested the Unctuous to the Positive, in a tone and with a look that blended insolence with compassion.

"Shut up—not he!" exclaimed the malicious Negative. "Why, he has not told us what a principle is, yet."

"Gentlemen," said the Chairman, at length opening his mouth, and speaking with the blindest accents—"gentlemen, I trust this discussion will be carried no further. What principle is, we all know alike. Indeed, I am sure there is not a man in this company that is not a man of principle. For why? Principle is based on moral conviction, and, therefore, it stands to reason moral conviction is the foundation of principle. A man without moral conviction is not worth the name of a man. Therefore, when I meet a party for the first time, I ask myself, not if he is rich, not if he is talented, but what are his moral convictions—in other words, what are his principles. So, to close

this discussion with an appropriate sentiment," added the venerable sage, raising his tumbler, "May we never so far worship interest as to lose all regard for principle; and may principle always be found conducive to interest."

"Fine old fellow that!" whispered the Uctuous, to a young gentleman beside him, whom we shall call the Novice. "You would not think he was getting on for eighty."

"Had a deal of trouble, too, with his family," whispered the Significant, as we shall term him, in the Novice's other ear.

"What matters a family to a man with a headpiece like that?" said the Uctuous, with a side-look of admiration at the Chairman, who had relapsed into a state of contemplative abstraction.

"I suppose HE will be here soon," observed the Positive, glancing at the face of the old-fashioned clock.

"Not for the next quarter of an hour," growled the Negative, whose temper had been somewhat ruffled by the check he had received in the midst of his victory.

"He came last night, when the hand of that clock was where it is now."

"I don't go by that clock; I go by the Horse Guards. I set my watch by the Horse Guards every Saturday," said the Negative, proudly drawing a pinchbeck timepiece from his waistcoat pocket.

"When I was a lad," remarked a Senile Voice in a corner of the room, "there were clocks with cuckoos in them—"

"And so there are now, for those who are fools enough to buy them," rudely interrupted the Negative.

"Rather sharp to-night!" ejaculated the sandy-whiskered neighbour of the Senile Voice.

"I did not address my observation to you," retorted the Negative, contemptuously.

An awkward pause ensued, which was at last interrupted by the meek Chairman, who observed, "I think the party must soon be here."

"Yes, if the Horse Guards allow him," said the Positive, glancing sarcastically at the Negative, who was now absorbed in the occupation of tickling a black cat.

"May I venture to ask who is expected with so much curiosity?" asked the Novice, timidly.

"Yes, certainly; he's nothing very particular," answered the Significant. "He's a gent that uses this parlour every evening of his life, and lives in a house that seems a deal too big for him. For though there's only ten rooms in the house, and that ain't much for a family man, it's a goodish size for one that lives only by himself like, with an old woman for a servant."

"There are twelve rooms in that house, if there's one," exclaimed the Positive. "I went over it six years ago."

"Did you?" observed the Negative. "And my brother papered it from top to bottom twenty years ago, so I know there's only ten, and I ought to know best."

"And the windows of the house are never cleaned," continued the Significant, "and the door-step never looks properly washed, and one-half of the rooms never seem occupied, and the gent don't look as if he had anything to do, and the old woman I'm sure does nothing at all, but saunters about and gossips from the grocer's to the publican's, muddling away her money, or most likely her master's money, in ounces of tea and half-pints of beer. But that gent yonder will tell you the most curious part of the business. Tell about your shop, gov'nor."

The Negative lifted up his head with something like a gesture of impatience as the Sandy man commenced his discourse. However, with a resigned look, he soon returned to the sport with the cat.

"You see, sir, I'm in the toy line," said the Sandy. "You know, of course, what toys are—all youngsters know about toys—and you, I'll make bold to say, have been a youngster in your time, and if you were a youngster now, I've no doubt you would lay out your pocket-money at my shop. Ay, I make bold to say it, you would not get a better article for the same price at any warehouse in London."

"No, that you wouldn't," squeaked the Senile Voice, with considerable enthusiasm, while the Negative, looking askance from his cat, gave a sceptical cough.

"Well, that boys should buy toys is natural enough—boy and toy is reason as well as rhyme," continued the Sandy speaker, looking round for a laugh, which, however, did not come. "But even little boys don't buy dolls, seeing that dolls are made expressly for little girls, and when a grown-up man like you buys a lot of dolls, it puts one out altogether."

"I suppose a man has a right to do what he likes with his own money," grunted the Negative, in a sort of semi-soliloquy.

"Of course, he has—who says he hasn't?" proceeded the Sandy. "I'm much obliged to any one for his custom, whether he's a man, or whether he's a woman, or whether he's a tom-cat. But still, when a gent comes week after week, as one may say, and buys a big doll, without having any young uns at home, it puts one out, I repeat, specially when people are not quite so sharp as other people, or, rather, as other people pretend to be."

Everybody knew that this last remark was pointed sarcastically at the Negative, but that gentleman ignored it utterly.

"And what is queerer still," continued the Sandy historian, "there is my brother-in-law, a master carpenter, who tells me that every week this same gent orders a little coffin, some two feet long, to be made, and when it is finished pays for it, and carries it away under his arm, just as he carries away the dolls."

"But how do you know where he lives, if he takes home the articles himself?" asked the Novice.

"That question is very well put, sir, and does credit to your discernment," observed the Ne-

gative, in a tone of gloomy approbation. "But you must know, sir, that when people attend to other people's business more than their own, they spare no pains to find other people's business out. Our friend there followed the gentleman home, and his brother-in-law, the journeyman carpenter, did the same."

"The master carpenter," ejaculated the Sandy orator, with visible signs of incipient wrath.

"Well, master carpenter, if you like to call him so," said the Negative, with a wink to the company generally. "That's neither here nor there. I say that you and your brother-in-law both followed the gentleman home."

"No I didn't," retorted the Sandy man, doggedly. "Nor my brother-in-law neither. I grant you my shop-boy did something of the sort."

"Well, you or your shop-boy, it's just the same thing."

"Now, I put it to you, gentlemen," exclaimed the historian, thinking he had his tormentor at a vantage—"I put it to you—am I the same thing as a boy twelve year old?"

"As far as sense and experience go, yes," shouted the Negative, as though he were darting a thunderbolt.

"Stop, stop, gentlemen," said the benignant Chairman. "I feel I must again interpose. We all, no doubt, should be glad enough to be boys again; but we don't like to be compared to boys. For you see we are all proud—too proud I must say—of the little sense with which we are blessed, and sense comes from experience, and experience is the result of years. Hence, though I often sigh for the return of my youth, I console myself with the reflection that we never are boys twice—"

"Except when we get into our second childhood," thought the Negative; but he did not give utterance to his thought, so great was the moral weight of the benignant Chairman with every person in the room.

"Besides," continued the mild sage, his countenance becoming more and more radiant with intense goodness, "I object to comparisons altogether: for as the poet beautifully observes, Comparisons are odd—no, I don't mean that. I mean—yes—"

Comparisons admit of no defence,
For want of courtesy is want of sense."

"Perhaps," suggested the Novice, returning to the story, through the briary obstacles that had recently sprung up, "the gentleman only bought the dolls and coffins to amuse some young friends."

"Queer sort of a toy—coffins," murmured the Significant.

"No," replied the historian to the Novice, leaping over the observation of the Significant—"no; for my brother-in-law's cousin keeps company with a young woman who is in service close to the gent's house, and she says, that though he carries many a parcel home, he carries none out."

"Of course, if there's any prying into other

folks' affairs, there's sure to be a woman in the case," observed the Negative.

"He's no great admirer of the ladies," whispered the Significant, "and he has no reason to be, if you knew all."

"I think there's a noise at the bar outside," observed the Positive, at last emerging from silence and the yesterday's newspaper.

"When did you hear of a bar without a noise in a thoroughfare like this?" asked the Negative, with exceeding sulkiness, when the attention of all alike was absorbed by the sudden entrance of the landlord with a face of overwhelming importance.

"You know the gent as none of you can make out?"

"Yes," was the universal response.

"Him with the dolls and coffins like?"

"Yes—yes," was the reply, uttered with increased impatience.

"Well, his old woman has been here—all of a flutter."

"He means the old servant," whispered the Significant to the Novice, lest the latter might suppose that the phrase "old woman" was used idiomatically for wife.

"She says she has had a turn," continued the landlord.

"A turn!" ejaculated the company.

"Yes, she says she opened a door that the gov'nor gen'rally keeps locked, because you see on this occasion he left the key in the keyhole, and walking in, what should she see but a row of shelves placed round the room, with nothing but little coffins upon them—all regularly covered with cloth, and ornamented with silver-headed nails."

"I knew the coffins would come to something," roared the Positive, with an explosion of eagerness.

"Well, what have they come to?" asked the Negative, with a quiet sneer. "They were coffins before, and they are coffins now."

"Yes, but when my brother-in-law gave them to the gent," interposed Sandy, "they were only plain wood, and now, it seems, they are fitted up with cloth and nails. Now I think of it, that accounts for the rapping that the servant-girl used to hear in the middle of the night as she passed the house."

"Strange time for a respectable young woman to be out—anyhow," snarled the Negative.

"I shouldn't wonder," said the Significant with a gasp, "if the dolls were inside the coffins."

"Shouldn't you?—then I should," brutally objected the Negative.

"Hush!" said the landlord, "here is Mr. Thingummy himself."

"And if it is Mr. Thingummy, I suppose one has a right to speak," retorted the Negative; but, however, as the new comer entered the room he became silent, and in spite of his affected indifference, could not conceal his curiosity.

No one could look less remarkable than the Theme of Discourse. He might be called an

indescribable person, simply because there was nothing about him to describe beyond the peculiarity that he was obviously higher in station and in breeding than those by whom his affairs had been so industriously discussed. As if totally unconscious of the tremendous events with which he was associated in the minds of all present, he quietly ordered a glass of mild ale, and in a tone of almost meek civility asked if the paper which lay on the table was engaged. The person nearest to the broadsheet having timidly responded in the negative, he sat down and read with intentness, while every line of his countenance was simultaneously read by the now silent gossips. The landlord contrived to linger in the room: the Negative forgot the presence of the cat; even the bland face of the Chairman assumed something like a hungry look.

The Positive at last broke a silence which was growing absolutely painful. "Is the toy trade pretty brisk?" said he to the Sandy.

"No," was the answer, "very flat; like everything else in these times."

"I suppose you sell as many dolls as ever?" nervously asked the Significant.

"Yes, yes," replied the Sandy, abstractedly.

"I don't see the use of dolls," audaciously ejaculated the Negative, darting upon the Theme of Discourse a look of the keenest impudence. "If I had a doll, I'd put it in a coffin, and bury it." These last words were uttered with something like a shout of defiance; but the speaker almost quailed, when the reader of the newspaper laid it down, and rising slowly, fixed his eyes upon him.

"I perceive I am the subject of conversation," said the Theme of Discourse, in the calmest tone.

"Not at all, sir, not at all," was the mendacious murmur, suggested by civility, that ran round the room. "He went too far," whispered the Significant to the Novice, alluding to the Negative; "as he always does."

"Pardon me," proceeded the Theme, "dolls and coffins could not have been mentioned together except in connexion with me."

"Well, sir, I suppose one has a right—" began the Negative, with reviving courage.

"A perfect right," said the Theme, "and in acknowledgment of that right, I am about to satisfy a curiosity that is not only justifiable but natural."

The Chairman, in his rampant benignity, was about to say, "Pray don't!" but a torrent of hushes drowned the first accents of his voice.

"I am a man not wealthy," said the Theme, "but blessed with an income that slightly exceeds my annual expenditure, and precludes the necessity of following any avocation."

Reciprocal winks were exchanged; but they were winks of the most respectful kind.

"In my youth I have seen a great deal, travelled a great deal, and suffered a great

many severe disappointments. I will add, that no hope I ever entertained was ever realised, and that to the ardour of my hopes I can attribute all the unhappiness I have endured."

The company looked wiser than it felt, and bowed with puzzled expectation.

"I have resolved, therefore, to live entirely without hope" (the assembly looked uncomfortable); "I mean, of course, as far as this world is concerned" (the assembly was reassured). "Not being compelled by circumstances to exert myself for a subsistence, I keep aloof from all the pursuits and all the amusements that interest ordinary men. If I committed myself to the toils of any profession—of any kind of research—of any branch of art—my desire of success would be so great, that in the event of failure I should merely renew the acute pains of former years. Still, in every day there are twenty-four hours, and these must be occupied in some way. I have therefore devised an occupation which is perfectly innocent" ("Encourages trade, too," thought the Sandy), "and with which no idea of success is associated. I fix all my glances on the past—none on the future. Every one of those dolls, which have so much excited your curiosity, is in my eyes a symbol of some old friendship—some old love—some old project—in a word, some old hope, and I choose them from some peculiarity, which, perhaps, you would hardly observe, but which to me connects them with some reality of the past. The decoration of the coffins just requires manipulative skill enough to afford the mind other employment than mere contemplation, and as the puppets represent hopes, so do the coffins represent disappointments. Hope and disappointment, as I have said, have been the curses of my existence. So when I have put the little figure in the receptacle that has been prepared for it, and have nailed down the lid, I feel that I have extinguished one misery with another, and that I can look calmly upon both as tormentors of the past, but as mere playthings of the present."

So saying, the Theme flung a small coin to the waiter, and slowly left the room.

"Poor gentleman!" said the benignant Chairman, compassionately.

"I should only like to be as well off as he is," said the Positive, knowingly.

"That's as it may be," said the Significant, doubtfully.

"Well, I know he pays ready money for all that I sell him," said the Sandy, warmly.

"And that's saying a great deal now-a-days," said the Senile Voice, approvingly.

"True," said the Unctuous, profoundly.

"I am afraid he is not quite right in his intellects," said the Novice, suggestively.

"I tell you what it is," said the Negative, dogmatically: "he has been telling us a parcel of stuff on purpose to gammon us, and that's the long and short of it."

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